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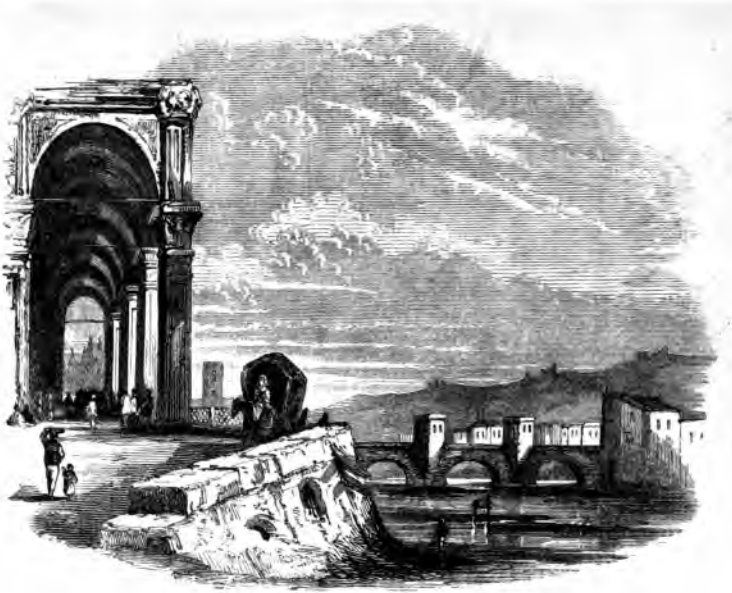

MY JOURNEY TO ITALY

TEN YEARS AGO:

OR,

Extracts from Letters to a Younger Sister.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
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MY JOURNEY TO ITALY.

LETTER I.

SUSA—ARCHWAY—TURIN—ERASMUS—ALOE—APPROACH TO GENOA.

Susa, Hôtel de la Poste, Oct. 1.

ITALY at last, my dearest Louisa! with its bright blue skies, and unclouded suns, and breathless plains. Get out your map, and follow us here, by the four places in Savoy at which we slept, after leaving Geneva—Frangi, Chambery, St. Jean de Maurienne, and Lanslebourg; and then look at the low dark ridge which *represents* Mont Cenis, and strive to

imagine that those few lines on the map are meant to represent a beautiful ridge of mountains, down which we came winding, with precipices on one side of us and steep rocks on the other, and mountain streams dashing across our path, after falling in rainbow-like cascades from the rocks above, while the plains of Lombardy are extended at our feet. As we descended we came to a very fertile country, abounding with vines, chestnut, and walnut-trees. Many things remind one of what one reads in the Bible; and to-day, for the first time, I saw a fig-tree growing wild by the roadside.

These thoughts were further impressed on my mind as we entered Susa, passing by an ancient arch of white marble, of which history records that it was built *eight years* before our Saviour was born, by

one of the many petty kings who bowed to the conquering arms of Rome. The Latin inscription cut upon it, and the raised figures of men and animals sculptured round, remain to this day very perfect. I have made a sketch for you of our inn; it is built, like most other Italian inns, round a small square court, into which you drive under an archway. The passages are outside the house; so that from our sitting-room, which was opposite to me, as I sat drawing, (and had "SALA," or "drawing-room," painted in black over the door,) we had to come out of doors to go upstairs to bed, and the stairs are almost as much exposed to the weather. The top of our carriage is drawn also in my sketch, to show where it stood in the road underneath. The floors of the *rooms in most* Italian inns are brick, and

carpets are very scarce. The rooms are bare of furniture, and would look cold but for the sunny skies that brighten everything.

Turin, October 3.

We came hither yesterday from Susa, and had *five horses* in one stage, as they were going to meet a coach, and no others could be got. I have made a sketch of them, and of the uncouth postilion, from the carriage window, for your amusement at some future day. The heat was very great after leaving Susa; and the dust troubled us not a little: but before entering Turin we passed for six miles through an avenue of pollard elms. Turin is a very handsome and regularly-built city; the streets are straight and

wide, intersecting each other at right angles; the houses have an ornamented cornice at the top.

One curious custom struck us much: the shopkeepers hang out from their houses a kind of banner of rich bright-coloured silk, such as is manufactured here, with their names either embroidered or painted on them in large letters. These hanging on either side the long straight streets, and waving with the slightest breeze, have a very singular effect. Behind Turin rises a range of hills, on one of which, richly dotted over with villas, is a handsome church, La Superba, which is seen along the plain for ten miles before reaching the city. This church was erected by Victor Amadeus, King of Sardinia and Duke of Savoy, after gaining *the battle* of Turin, fought with the

French king, Louis XIV. in 1706. Victor vowed to erect a church, "if it should please the Lord of Hosts to grant him and his people deliverance from the hand of the enemy;" and he thus fulfilled his vow.

We have rooms nearly at the top of an immense hotel in the Great Square of the town, and opposite to the King's palace. In the midst of the square stands a tall square building adorned with pilasters and statues, and anciently the castle, of which, indeed, two towers remain, but now called Palazzo Madama.

My little pupils, Flora and Helen, are enchanted with the groups that pass through the Great Square. I had been sitting sketching there, and while thus occupied two royal carriages, with six horses each, and outriders before, have driven out of the opposite archway of

the palace, while a crowd collects to see the King pass, and many take off their hats as he goes by. One bowing gentleman attracted the children's attention particularly; his hair was carefully tied in a long pig-tail, as you may have seen in old pictures in England. The soldiers, drawn up in front of Palazzo Madama, presented arms as the carriages went by. A procession of nuns were slowly passing across the square at the same time, the foremost bearing a cross; but they did not turn their heads at the sound of the carriages, but proceeded on their way unmoved, followed by a priest in a white robe and cocked hat.* A woman in a white veil

* "The fraternities and sisterhood comprehend members from every rank of society. You may see a *smart cap* or a handsome collar, or a pair of

is selling roasted chestnuts in the middle of the square, and appears to have many customers; while behind her, coming in apparently from the country, is a clumsy two-wheeled cart, full of vegetables, drawn by two beautiful cream-coloured oxen. Their forms are fine and picturesque, and their dark mild eyes have an expression of great gentleness. Further on in the square a crowd of figures are congregated together round a very excited-looking Italian, who, mounted on a chair, seems holding forth on the value of some shells he is selling.

Night came on, after the short twilight of these southern climes, before I had left

neat silk stockings peeping out beneath the grey veil and the ash-coloured robe, as often as the hem of a gown of the poorest material; but all distinctions are levelled, though not entirely concealed, *by the monastic garb*."—MURRAY'S *Handbook*.

the balcony, and with it came a party of the most delightful singers I ever heard. Two men and two women with guitars were the performers, and seemed singing a kind of opera; but I was so far above them that I could not often catch the words, though the melodies seemed softer and sweeter for the distance.

October 5.

We went yesterday to look over the pictures in Palazzo Madama; they are many of them wonderfully beautiful. One of these was the picture of the Virgin Mary, by Carlo Dolce, called "Mater Dolorosa." It represents her with clasped hands and eyes cast down, the exquisitely beautiful and sorrowful face shaded by a blue mantle. The ex-

pression given by the painter is just that with which we could fancy that our blessed Saviour's mother "pondered in her heart" over the marvellous works that He wrought. The other picture that I happen to remember best was a portrait of Erasmus by Holbein. He is drawn in a cap and furred gown, with both hands resting on an open book.

October 9.

Genoa, called by the Italians *Genova la superba:* "Genoa the Magnificent." I have kept my letter to finish at this place, which is certainly the most interesting I have yet seen. We left Turin on the 6th, and slept that night at Alessandria, a very dirty town. We passed through Asti, the birth-place

of the poet Alfieri, and stopped to see the room where he was born. We also came through a small place called Annone —the name is taken from the Latin words *ad nonum*, or "at the ninth"—the village being at the ninth milestone from Asti. It is on the banks of the river Tanaro; and we were told a strange story of its unhealthiness by our courier, who said a peculiar madness affects the inhabitants, and causes them to drown themselves.

After leaving Alessandria, I could think of nothing but that I was about to behold the Mediterranean sea! The heat was intense, and the dust was very annoying; but at last we caught sight of the vast expanse of blue ocean; and, after coasting it for a short time, with the sea to our right and a sloping hill covered with gardens to our left, we

turned into Genoa under a rocky archway, along the top of which grew a row of aloes. Their large pointed leaves had a truly foreign appearance in my eyes; you may remember seeing one kept as a great treasure in the Priory-gardens. Several of them were in flower as we passed. Genoa is built in the shape of a semicircle round the bay, terminated at both ends by a pier. From the one near the gate by which we entered the lighthouse juts out into the sea; and we spent yesterday evening on the balcony of our hotel, gazing on the flashes of its revolving light, which was reflected in long streaks upon the calm bosom of the sea. Then up rose the glorious moon, large, round, and brilliant, her light seeming more glowing and less cold than that of our English moon. A pier juts out into the sea below

our hotel, and by it are moored a quan
of the graceful Genoese vessels, v
their bending masts and lateen sails ;
moon gleams upon them brightly,
we can see the sailors moving about
red caps and striped shirts, many
them with a red silk scarf tied ro
their waist.

LETTER II.

STREETS OF GENOA—VILLA GARDENS—FLOWERS AT GENOA.

Genoa, Osteria di Villa, Oct. 14.

How I long for my dear Louisa here! where things and people all look far more decidedly strange to English eyes than anything I have yet seen. We have spent a great deal of time walking about the town, for the streets are literally most of them too narrow for any carriage to pass through, and the houses are so high, and project so far at the top, that even the sunshine never gets into the street itself, and you have to raise your head in order to look at the narrow strip of blue sky above you. I cannot describe half the extraordinary-looking alleys and bye-

lanes one gets into, nor give you an adequate description of the curious figures one meets in quick succession in the crowded streets; so crowded, that you are in constant fear of being run over, or pushed into the gutter, which flows fast and wide down the middle of every street; the sides of which, moreover, slope into it. There come a group of young women with the graceful large veils (universally worn here instead of bonnets) falling in numerous folds over their head and shoulders. These are of white muslin, and, coming down almost to the eyebrows, are twisted under the chin, the fingers of one hand beautifully disposed amongst the folds, while the other is placed across the breast. They walk well, and the train to their gown causes them to pass along with a slow

and dignified motion. The veil conceals their beautiful black hair, braided round the back of the head and fastened with a silver pin. A little further is an old woman coming down the street with a basket of figs in her hand; her veil is of something between linen and calico, with a white ground and gay pattern, and border of red flowers upon it. Now the way is cleared for a long row of loaded mules with red tufts on their harness, and tinkling bells round their neck. These are succeeded by running footmen attending a sedan chair, containing probably one of the great ladies of Genoa; for there are still noble families to be found there, though the courtyards of her palaces are grass-grown, and many of their fountains dry.

Again our progress is stopped by a

number of people approaching, and we hear the clank of chains, and see a row of galley-slaves dressed in red clothes, and fettered two and two, going to their labour in some of the public works of the city. They are desperate looking men, most of them; and the children shudder and cling closer to me as they pass. Those who have committed murder have black stripes round their caps; while those who have been thieves are distinguished by a yellow one.

Genoa being built up the side of the hill, most of the streets are very steep. The houses are painted all sorts of colours; and many of the palaces are adorned with fresco paintings outside, but these lie chiefly in the three principal streets—Strada Balbi, Nuova, and Nuovissima; these streets are continuous, and when

walking up them, looking into every open court as you proceed, you may well think yourself in a city of kings.*

The following lively description, from "Pictures in Italy," will be an acceptable addition to the preceding letter:—

* "The usual disposition of the palaces exhibits a large hall supported partly on columns, leading to a court surrounded by arcades, the arches of which likewise rest upon columns. Sometimes on one side of the street, these courts are on a level with the external pavement, while on the other, the rapid rise of the ground is made up for by a flight of marble steps. Beyond this court is the great staircase rising on either hand, and further still is frequently a small garden shaded with orange trees; this is all invariably open to the public view, and the long perspective of halls, courts, columns and steps produce a most magnificent effect, still further enhanced when the splendour of the marble is contrasted with the dark shades of the orange groves."—Woods.

"Villa Bagnerello (it sounds romantic, but Signor Bagnerello is a butcher hard by,) is in one of the most splendid situations imaginable. The noble bay of Genoa, with the deep blue Mediterranean, lie stretched out near at hand; monstrous old desolate houses and palaces are dotted all about; lofty hills, with their tops often hidden in the clouds, and with strong forts perched up high on their craggy sides, are close upon the left; and in front, stretching from the walls of the house down to a ruined chapel which stands upon the bold and picturesque rocks on the seashore, are green vineyards, where you may wander all day long in partial shade, through interminable vistas of grapes, trained on a rough trellis-work across the narrow *paths.*

"This sequestered spot is approached by lanes so very narrow, that when we arrived at the Custom-house, we found the people here had taken the measure of the narrowest among them, and were waiting to apply it to the carriage; which ceremony was gravely performed in the street, while we stood by in breathless suspense, and it was found to be a very tight fit; just a possibility, and no more.

"When you have got through these narrow lanes, you come to an archway, imperfectly stopped up by a rusty old gate. The rusty old gate has a bell to correspond, which you ring as long as you like, and which nobody answers, as it has no connexion whatever with the house. But there is a rusty old knocker too, very loose, so that it slides round

when you touch it; and if you learn the trick of it, and knock long enough, somebody comes. You walk into a seedy little garden all wild and weedy, from which the vineyard opens; cross it, enter a square hall like a cellar, walk up a cracked marble staircase, and pass into a most enormous room with a vaulted roof and whitewashed walls. This is the Sala. It has five windows and five doors, and is decorated with curious pictures, and furnished with a sort of red brocade. All the chairs are immovable, and the sofa *weighs several tons!* On the same floor, and opening out of this same chamber, are dining-room, drawing-room, and divers bedrooms, each with a multiplicity of doors and windows. Up stairs are several other gaunt chambers, and a kitchen; and down stairs is another

kitchen, which, with all sorts of strange contrivances for burning charcoal, looks like an alchemical laboratory.

"A mighty old, wandering, ghostly echoing, grim, bare house it is, as ever I beheld or thought of. There is a little vine-covered terrace opening from the drawing-room; and under this terrace, and forming one side of the little garden, is what used to be the stable. It is now a cow-house, and has three cows in it, so that we got plenty of new milk. There is no pasturage near, and they never go out, but are constantly lying down and surfeiting themselves with vine leaves—perfect Italian cows 'enjoying the *dolce far niente*' 'all day long.' They are presided over and slept with by two burnt sienna-coloured natives: an old man named Antonio and his son, with

naked legs and feet, who wear, each, a shirt, a pair of trousers, and a red sash with some relic or sacred charm (looking like a coloured sugar-plum off a twelfth cake,) hanging round their neck.

"The view, as I have said, is charming; but in the day you must keep the lattice blinds close shut, or the sun will drive you mad; and when the sun goes down you must shut up all the windows, for the mosquitoes swarm. So at this time of the year you do not see much of the prospect out of doors. As for flies, you do not mind *them;* nor the fleas, whose size is prodigious, and whose numbers are countless, and who people the coach-house to that extraordinary degree, that I daily expect to see the carriage going off bodily, drawn by myriads of industrious fleas in harness. The rats are kept away, quite

comfortably, by scores of lean cats, who roam about the garden for that purpose. The lizards, of course, nobody cares for; they play in the sun, and do not bite. The little scorpions are merely curious. The beetles are rather late, and have not appeared yet. The frogs are company. There is a preserve of them in the grounds of the next villa; and after nightfall one would think that scores upon scores of women in pattens, were going up and down without a moment's cessation. That is exactly the noise they make.

"The narrow lanes have great villas opening into them, whose *outside* walls are profusely painted with all sorts of subjects. But time and sea air have nearly obliterated them, and they look like the entrance into Vauxhall Gardens on a sunny day. The court-yards to these

houses are overgrown with grass and weeds; all sorts of hideous patches cover the bases of the statues, as if they had been afflicted with a cutaneous disorder; the outer gates are rusty, and the iron bars outside the lower windows are all tumbling down. Firewood is kept in halls, where costly treasures might be heaped up mountains high; waterfalls are dry and choked; fountains too dull to play, and too lazy to work, have just enough recollection of their identity in their sleep to make the neighbourhood damp; and the sirocco, or hot east wind, is often blowing over all these things for days together, like a gigantic oven out for a holiday."

Genoa, October 16.

To-MORROW, alas, we leave Genoa: so I take up my pen to describe our last day here, though it is late, and I feel very tired with the many things we have crowded into it. I have made two sketches here: one, from our hotel window, of the sea, the opposite shore, and the light-house, with the crowd of graceful vessels down below us. The other, from the open court of Palazzo Doria, with its white marble arcade and pillars; and beyond, the city walls, with the aloes on the top; the marble balustrade, and the distant house tops, below which extends the Mediterranean. To begin with breakfast time: I think I have never told you that a plate of the most delicious green

figs is served up with the breakfast things every morning as a matter of course; and truly refreshing they are in these intensely hot days. They are often so ripe as to have burst their green skins, and show a stripe of their rich pulpy insides, of a colour between crimson and purple, with golden seeds; and are still as famous for their *sweet* taste as we find they were in eastern countries in the olden time, when, in Jotham's famous parable, (Judges ix. 10, 11,) "the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us." "But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

Immediately after breakfast we proceeded to the Conservatorio delle Fieschine, a sort of nunnery, where we had

been for some days engaged to go to see the beautiful manufactory of flowers which it is famous for. It was the first nunnery I had visited, and a sort of grim sadness seemed to pervade the massy doors and walls, when I felt that through them none of its many youthful inmates might pass freely to and fro.* A priest conducted us over the house, and expatiated on the merits of the establishment, and on the beauty of the garden. There the matron joined us, and told us that the girls are allowed to walk in the

* "There are 250 girls in this asylum, which was founded for orphans by Dominico Fieschi in 1762. Half the profits of their work belong to the workers, and with these they are often enabled not only to relieve their relations out of the house, but even to accumulate a small dowry. The establishment is said to be very kindly conducted." MURRAY'S *Handbook*.

garden every day; but that should one ever leave its boundaries, she must not return again. They enter between the ages of twelve and fifteen, and may remain all their life if they choose, except in case of misconduct, which is very rare. We walked through the rooms, where, at long rows of tables, the girls worked—two or three at each table; but they are not allowed to speak without a special permission from the lady abbess or matron, as we discovered after vainly addressing two or three of them. Many little images and crucifixes were stuck up round the walls, and one or two had basins of holy water near them. The flower work was, indeed, curious, from the extreme delicacy of fingers it required. Silk seemed the chief material used; and we observed that at each table they only made parts of the

flower, which must have been much more tiresome than constructing a whole one. One had a heap of petals; another of stamens, another of buds, &c. &c.; then we got to one where single flowers were made up; and, lastly, to the table where the beautiful sprays of flowers were completed. We went into the show-room hung with wreaths of flowers; and with almost every kind you could mention placed in sprays on a table in the middle of the room. Mrs. N. told Flora and Helen each to choose one. Flora took a branch of orange flower, and Helen a fuchsia, while Mrs. N. presented me with a lovely spray of myrtle. It is almost impossible to persuade oneself it is not real, with its clusters of flowers and buds, some of them with the most delicate pink upon them. I bought yesterday for you, in

one of the shops, a little wreath of *feather flowers* of bright colours, which are also made here, but they do not look near so natural as those I have just mentioned. We were told that the curve in the leaves and petals was made by pressing each with a hot iron on a soft cushion.

We passed through the kitchen before we left the Conservatorio, where some of the girls were at work preparing dinner: one was shelling a large heap of chestnuts.

We drove to Pegli afterwards, to see the gardens of the Lomellini Palace. The palace, or rather the two palaces, stand in the midst of the garden, which after all was not a real *flower* garden, but was all shrubbery and kitchen garden. Most Italian gardens have all sorts of *little artificial* devices; and here they

abounded. There was a grotto full of bright little bits of glass and shells; and a pond full of gold fish; a theatre in the open air on a small scale; and a cottage with a wooden hermit in it as large as life, and dressed as a monk; his pallet, table, and trunk of wood, all looking very natural by the side, with a bowl or two and a jug. Flora and Helen were excessively startled when he began to move his head up and down, not having perceived the gardener taking hold of a string which passed through the figure.

We enjoyed a walk through the shrubberies under large trees, which gave a delightful shade, and beside a rippling brook. There is a temple also in the garden, and the palaces are very grand; and yet they seemed, as most Italian

palaces do, fine buildings very ill kept. But, to make up for this, there were the fruits and flowers of this southern clime in astonishing profusion to our English eyes. In the first place there were hedges of myrtle, covered with sprays of flowers and buds, which Helen could not satisfy herself with gathering,* so extraordinary did it seem to her to see them thus running wild! She also gathered there a handful of "Sweet Basil," and we found, apparently wild, a bunch of the sweet-scented Narcissus, with its bright yellow cup and delicate white petals; and some of another spe-

* The beautiful myrtle grows commonly in Italy as an underwood, and its glossy green leaves, and delicate white blossoms, with its delightful perfume, make it one of the most attractive of plants.

cies, generally called the Cyprus Narcissus, with double flowers, the outer petals white, the inner mingled white and orange.

I shall be glad in future days to read my letters again, and recal to mind our Genoa nosegays: so I will yet name two plants; the Jasmine (Italian *Gelsomino*) so dearly loved by all Italians, shall be first. Few gardens in this favoured country are without it, and its white blossoms shine like little stars in their shrubberies and groves.

The other plant is the Arbutus, commonly called strawberry-tree, from the resemblance of its fruit to a strawberry. Its leaves remain on through the winter, and it is always covered with produce; the blossoms of the present year and the fruits of the last being on its branches at

the same time,* and realising the poet's idea of everlasting fruitfulness.

After dinner we strolled out again, and went up to take leave of the beautiful *Acqua Sola*, a sort of promenade garden high up on the hill on which the town is built, with a splendid view, and a delightful fountain always bubbling, and gushing, and pouring, with a refreshing sound, and diffusing a delightful coolness. Weeping willows surround the fountain with their graceful branches; and hither the

* "There is continual spring, and harvest there
Continual; both meeting at one time;
For both the boughs do laughing blossoms bear,
And with fresh colours deck the wanton prime;
And eke at once the heavy trees they climb,
Which seem to labour under their fruit's load:
The whiles the joyous birds make their pastime
Amongst the shady leaves, their sweet abode."

SPENSER'S *Faerie Queene.*

Italians constantly resort both in carriages and on foot, and are frequently enlivened by a band of music. Altogether it is a lovely spot, and I was sorry to say "good-by" to it. We visited a good many shops afterwards; and Mrs. N. bought a beautiful black velvet gown of Genoese manufacture. This town is famous for its street of goldsmiths, who excel particularly in very light filagree gold and silver ornaments. I bought a little silver brooch for my aunt, of the most delicate open work, and in the shape of a butterfly. The Genoese are famous for their skill in arranging nosegays of real flowers, as well as in imitating artificial ones. We bought one to carry away with us. It was large, round, and formal, but deliciously sweet. A thick row of orange flowers formed the

outside, and regular circles of violets, dark and pale, roses, laurustinus, and myrtles, were wound round and round to a camellia centre, the whole forming a smooth surface, no leaf or sprig projected beyond the others. We walked into the open court of Palazzo Doria, and admired the light arcades by which it is surrounded, and the view of the ramparts and the sea beyond. A row of Yuccas were growing on the top of one of the fortifications. It was a delicious afternoon, and we extended our walk down to the wharf. Numbers of Genoese sailors, in red caps and sashes, were lounging and lying about in the sunshine in every direction; and the old stone arcades were black with age and filth. Heaps of fish also in the neighbourhood contributed to render the

smells very different from those in the so-called, "English garden" of the Lomellini Palace. By-the-bye, if ever you see a sort of shrubbery gone wild, with few flowers, and sham ruins and hermitages innumerable, you may be sure it is called here an "English garden!"

LETTER III.

ORANGE GROVES—THE DEATH OF THE BRIDE—PISA—FLORENCE.

Chiavari, October 17.

We left Genoa this morning with sincere regret. The road went coasting round the deep blue sea, which formed innumerable little bays and inlets into the fertile shores. To our left rose gently undulating hills, scattered over with villas and palaces, small white houses, and gardens and terraces of splendid plants. We particularly observed quantities of the Oleander, or Rhododaphne, with its bright evergreen leaves and bunches of scarlet flowers. The Italians call it the

"Laurel Rose" (*rosa lauro*); and also "St. Joseph's Staff" (*Mazza di San Giuseppe*); and "Ass Slayer" (*amazza l'asino*). The latter name reminded Mr. N. that he had read in Sir William Jones's works that "the Hindoos call this plant 'horse-killer,' from a notion that horses, inadvertently eating of it, are killed by it. Most of the species, especially their roots, have strong medicinal, probably narcotic powers."

Suddenly a perfect gale of sweetness came to us, and we stopped the carriage in delight at perceiving, for the first time, a real *wood* of orange-trees, growing up the side of a hill!

We got out and walked for some little time under the orange-trees,* picking up

* "The first China orange," says Evelyn, "which appeared in Europe, was sent as a pre-

the fallen flowers, and admiring the golden fruit, of which the old poet, Andrew Marvell, says—

> " He hangs in shade the orange bright,
> Like golden lamps in a green night."

The trees were planted some distance apart, and are very round in shape, seldom exceeding twenty feet in height. The fruit and blossom on the trees toge-

sent to the old Condé Mellor, then prime minister to the King of Portugal; but of the whole case sent to Lisbon, there was but one plant which escaped the being so spoiled and tainted, that, with great care, it hardly recovered, to be since become the parent of all those flourishing trees of that name planted by our gardeners! Receiving this account from the illustrious son of the Condé, I thought fit to mention it as an instance of what man's industry may do in less than half a century." The orange-tree is thought to produce more fruit, if deprived of some of its blos-

soms.

ther have a very rich effect; and the large glossy green leaves soften down the brilliancy of the yellow fruit.

"Through the green shade the golden orange glows."
ARMSTRONG.

A few citrons were interspersed in the grove; but I think them too acid to be good, though their taste is more perfumed and sweeter than that of the lemon. Mr. N. bought a basket-full of oranges for about twopence English; and exhorted us to eat them early in the day, remembering the old Spanish proverb, that an orange is "*gold* in the morning, *silver* in the middle of the day, and *lead* at night."

We gathered two or three periwinkles yet remaining in blow, though it is late for them, as they are a summer flower.

The Italians call it "pervinca," which seems to have been the old English name too, as Chaucer says—

> "There sprange the violet all newe,
> And fresh *pervinke*, rich of hue."

Wordsworth describes it in a few graphic lines—

> "Through primrose tufts in that sweet bower,
> The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
> And 'tis my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes."

An Italian peasant, who met us returning to the carriage with our flowers, told us the "pervinca" is made into garlands by the women hereabouts, to place in the coffins of their dead infants, whence it is called "fior di morte:" "flower of death."

The large white jasmine appeared *growing wild* by the road side as w

drove along, and the gales of perfume that reached us were delightful!

This is rather a large town, on the shore of the Mediterranean. We vainly looked about for shells on the sea-beach this evening; not one is to be seen.

Spezzia, October 19.

This is an exceedingly lovely village, with a beautiful bay. In coming here to-day, we passed over some high points of the Apennines. The large sweet yellow broom grew plentifully on the mountains, and also our garden lavender; and there were bushes of myrtle covered with both flowers and fruit. Many vessels are sailing about this bay, which is, to-day, as smooth as glass. Flora bought from one

of the peasants an extraordinary kind of hat, which is universally worn here by the women; but it can be of no use, it seems to me, as it is so flat, round, and small, they stick it on one side of their head. It is usually covered with bows of ornamented straw. I went out before breakfast this morning, and made a sketch of a pretty little black-eyed maiden, with one of these peculiar hats on the side of her head. It makes the head look large, and gives rather a bold look, as it certainly does not shade the face in any way. Under it, the back of the head is covered with a red or blue silk net, and two long plaited tails of hair hang down the back, interwoven with black ribbon. We have halted here two days, as yesterday was Sunday; and to-day we took a drive round *one side of the* bay to an extraordinary

little town, called Porto Venere, built on a steep rock, quite at the end of the bay. The streets are so narrow, that no carriage can enter; and there is *no road* out of the town on the opposite side, as it stands on a precipice. We saw a sportsman with velveteen shooting-jacket, game bag, &c., established by the side of the road, to shoot small birds, one of which he had placed hard by, in a cage, to attract others.

Pisa, October 22.

Here we are in Tuscany, and established in a hotel, on the side of the Arno, the great river which runs through Florence, where I rather long to arrive. We had a long day's journey, the day before yesterday, from Spezzia hither, and passed through Carrara, where the la-

mous quarries of white marble are, which now supply all Italy, and have done so for centuries. Its perfect whiteness is *really* dazzling: as, when freshly cut, there is a glitter in it like the sparkling surface of untrodden snow on a frosty day in England. We had two beautiful cream-coloured oxen harnessed before our four horses, to draw us up the mountain at Carrara: more fuss than was necessary for the steepness of the hill, but the children enjoyed it immensely.

Pisa, October 23.

We spent a very agreeable afternoon yesterday in visiting some of the magnificent buildings in this old town. Four of them stand within a stone's throw of *each other, upon* an expanse of smooth

green lawn, and the effect is very extraordinary. These are the Cathedral, the Baptistery, the Leaning Tower, and the "Campo Santo," or burying-ground: all are built of white marble. The latter interested us, particularly from the story attached to it. It consists of a large oblong square of green grass, built round, with a cloister open on one side, which is formed of beautifully light arches and pillars. This burying-ground is made of earth brought in ships from the Holy Land, and, it is said, from Mount Calvary itself, by a certain Ubaldo Lanfranchi, a contemporary of our lion-hearted King Richard the First, and deposited here, A. D. 1200. No one may be buried in this place, except by the express permission of the Grand Duke (or Sovereign) of Tuscany.

Two hundred and forty-four steps lead up to the top of the Leaning Tower. There is a beautiful view from it, but it leans over so much as to make one very giddy, as, when walking round the leaning side, you feel as if suspended in the air.

October 24.

I was sitting quietly reading in the drawing-room we occupy in this hotel this morning, when I was startled by the door opening, and at the same moment heard an exclamation of alarm from Flora, who was lying on the floor learning her lesson. I turned round, and saw standing in the middle of the room a tall dark figure. I suppose it was a priest, but it might have been anything else, for aught we could see, as a long dark *robe covered it to* the very feet; and a

pointed sort of veil, with two round holes, like eyes, of the same material with the robe, covered the head. It jingled a wooden box, with a slit in it, (apparently containing money,) and repeated in a deep dismal voice. "Pei poveri!—pei poveri!" "for the poor!—for the poor!" Mr. N. deposited a few small bits of money in the box, and the figure retired as it had come. I immediately tried to sketch it for you, and you shall have the drawing next opportunity.

Nearly next door to this hotel stands a marble-fronted palace, over the door of which is written "Alla Giornata." Our guide, in showing us about Pisa, told the following story, to account for the inscription:—

"One of the family of Lanfreducci, who inhabit that palace now, went, in the

COLLECTING ALMS.

olden time, to fight against the Turks, and made the son of the Grand Sultan his prisoner. After six years the captive was brought to Pisa, and petitioned earnestly for his liberty; which was promised him when the day should come that all Christians ate meat on a Friday, which probably in his mind meant—never. But it happened the very next Christmas-day fell on a Friday; and so the son of the Grand Sultan was safely restored to his own country. After a time the Italian went again to the wars, and this time it chanced that *he* was made prisoner by his former captive, who immediately gave him his liberty. Forthwith returning to his native city, the son of the Lanfreduccis built that palace, and placed the inscription you read over the door in remembrance of his adventures."

October 24.

Our last day in Pisa. The general impression of this place is that of profound stillness. The river flows tranquilly along the middle of the town, unenlivened by boats; and the streets, though lined with fine buildings, seem almost uninhabited.

Florence, Nov. 8.
Hotel of the Gran Bretagna.

"Of all the fairest cities of the earth,
None is so fair as Florence,"

said the poet Rogers; and I am inclined to agree with him. We have now been here a week, and find so much to do, that I feel my letters will be necessarily "*few, and far* between." Mr. N. has

taken rooms for the winter in this very comfortable inn, which stands (as our hotel at Pisa did) on the side of the river Arno, which is here a very large river. We are on what is here called the sunny side of the river; and the bright sunshine pouring in makes our rooms very cheerful.

The country round Florence is steep and hilly, and beautifully dotted with houses and palaces, generally white; and here the olive-tree grows in profusion. We looked upon it with great respect, thinking how often it is mentioned in the Bible. The olive-tree has long branches and thin foliage: the leaves are not unlike our willows in shape, but not so long, and the under side has a silvery colour, which looks very pretty when the branches wave about in the wind.

The Tuscan language is reckoned very pure. There is an old proverb, which says, "Lingua Toscana, Bocca Romana," meaning, that to speak Italian well, you should speak the language of Tuscany with the pronunciation of Rome.

The splendid dome of the great cathedral here was the first thing we saw of this great city, called commonly Firenze la Bella, or Florence the Beautiful, as Genoa has been for ages known by the title of "the Magnificent;" and Rome, yet a queen amongst her ruins, rejoices in the name of "The Eternal City."

November 16.

We have here the great comfort of our own Church Service, and an English clergyman. The church was opened in 1844.

FLORENCE.

The noble Gallery of pictures here, containing some of the finest paintings of the ablest masters of the Florentine school, is a never-ending source of delight. Whenever a rainy day occurs (which is not often) we walk there for exercise. Except on Sundays and holidays, this noble collection is open to all.

We went to-day to "the Academy of Fine Arts," where the works of Tuscan painters are placed in order, according to the time they lived in, and the gradual improvement in the art. Cimabue was the beginner of this style of painting. He was born at Florence in 1240. There is a picture by him of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Saviour in her arms; and there is another on the same subject by the painter Giotto, his pupil and *friend, which* far surpasses his master's.

LETTER IV.

OLIVES—THE FLOWER GIRL—THE CATHEDRAL—DANTE.

Florence, November 20.

Our time has passed very pleasantly since I last wrote to you, and we have taken several excursions into the beautiful country around Florence. One of the most interesting of these was to the *Petraja*, which is a villa belonging to the Grand Duke, where he has a manufactory of oil from the olives, which grow plentifully around the villa and over many of the neighbouring hills Their thin stiff foliage makes a peculiar rustling in the wind; and the very rough bark of the old trees looks

as if they had stood the weather for many hundreds of years: and so they probably have. Some of the most ancient in the world still grow in the garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives (our Blessed Saviour's favourite spot on earth); and they are said to be the identical trees that grew there when He walked under the shade.* The stems of old trees look like three or four pollard willows clustered

* "As to the objection founded on the age of the trees in the garden of Gethsemane, there are other olive trees which claim an equal date. For instance, there is at Gericomio, on the mountain road between Tivoli and Palestina, an ancient olive-tree of large size, which, unless the documents are purposely falsified, stood as a boundary between two possessions, even *before* the Christian era, and in the second century was looked upon as very ancient. That tree produced a large crop annually so late as 1820." — LADY CALLCOTT'S *Scripture Herbal*, *p.* 336.

together; and the greyish brown bark showing every here and there the white bleached wood underneath, as in cracks, adds to the likeness. The olive is an evergreen; and produces bunches of whitish flowers, succeeded by a fruit about the size of a sloe. The taste is bitter and nauseous; yet the country people may often be seen sitting under the olive-trees, and eating the fruit raw, as a relish to their dry bread. The olive gives a double harvest. The first is in or about August; when the fully ripe fruit falls from the tree, on sheets, or mats, spread out to catch it. The second is in October, when the tree is beaten with long sticks, that no olives may be left upon it. The olive is usually increased by transplanting the suckers from the old roots into a fresh soil.

Oil expressed from the olive forms the most profitable article of trade that Tuscany possesses.

The garden at the Petraja Palace is very beautiful, and there is in it a lovely fountain by John of Bologna; the centre of the basin rises into a statue of a female figure wringing her hair, from the ends of which the water flows. A row of tall dark cypresses bounds the garden, whence there is a fine view over the city of Florence. We descended into a building where the great oil-press was being turned round and round by a handsome cream-coloured ox; he was driven by a little girl about eight years old, with a picturesque black velvet cap on, who sat on a high seat behind, which turned with him. The first stone weight crushes the fruit, which is then *put into baskets* made of a sort of coarse

grass-plat, which are afterwards placed like so many cheeses in a press under a great screw, that forces out the oil on all sides, and the oil is then conducted by a tube to the vessels below, where it stands till the thick particles have all fallen to the bottom. This is called virgin oil; a coarser sort is afterwards made from the same materials, and then the paste is used as fuel.

In returning home from the Petraja we met picturesquely-dressed country people, many of them driving light carts, others with donkeys and panniers. The women here are very fond of necklaces, and they wear very valuable ones, which often descend as heirlooms in a family, or form the whole of a bride's dowry. The handsomest consist of many rows of pearls fastened with a broad gold clasp. Those who cannot afford these

have them of coral beads. There is a pretty, graceful flower-woman here, who is famous for the beauty of her pearl necklace; her pretty face is shaded by a huge round Leghorn straw hat, which flaps down before and behind. With a merry smile she flings her beautiful posies to the children, large bunches of double violets seem to go for nothing with her; and she often has exquisitely-arranged bunches of mignonette, jasmine, camellias, and carnations. She refuses all payment of money at the time; and we are told is amply satisfied with a very moderate present when the families leave Florence. People say she is betrothed to the Grand Duke's gardener, who is allowed to supply her with flowers, and that she is by slow degrees collecting enough money for her *dowry. She often* adds to her costume

a wreath of flowers round the straw hat, and is well known by all who have visited Florence for some years past—Giuseppina is her name.*

I have not yet spoken to you of the beautiful cathedral here; that and the baptistery (which is a separate building, with a dome to itself) stand in a great square, and contain within their walls many very fine specimens of art. The outside is of black and white marble. The four naves were built long before the magnificent dome, which is seen for many a mile round the town, and was added by Brunelleschi; though most of his fellow-citizens thought the thing impossible. He did not live to see his work completed; the lantern at the top of the

* See Frontispiece.

cupola was added afterwards.* This dome served as a model to Michael Angelo for St. Peter's at Rome. His admiration of it was so great, that he used to say—"Copy thee, I will not; excel thee, I cannot." The painted glass in the cathedral is very fine; and the pavement is adorned with red, blue, and white marble, in compartments. The interior of the dome is painted in fresco, with large figures representing angels, prophets, saints, &c. These, however, when finished, were not approved by the Florentine citizens, and a burlesque popular song of the time ran thus:—

"Georgin shall be blamed; Georgin,
Rashly, boldly, did this sin;
He presumptuously painted
This our dome, till then untainted.

* *He is* buried in the cathedral.

And we Florentines will grumble,
Grumble on unwearied quite,
Till the dome is painted white!"*

One cannot read any part of the complicated histories of Tuscany, without being struck by the excessive fickleness of this same Florentine people! In this cathedral is a painting of their great poet Dante, who loved his country, and fought its battles; and yet was exiled by his ungrateful countrymen, and spent the latter part of his life in banishment. In this picture he is represented in a red robe, with a wreath of laurel leaves encircling his stern features. On his left

* "Georgin, Georgin, debb' essere incolpato,
Georgin, fece il peccato;
Presuntuosamente il primo èstato,
La cupola a dipingere;
E il popol Fiorentino
Non sarà mai di lamentarsi stanco,
Se forse un dì, non se le da il bianco!"—Lasca.

hand is the town of Florence, encircled by walls; and on his right a representation of the three circles of his magnificent poem.

The baptistery, now called St. John's, is an exact octagon. Its three magnificent sculptured brazen gates are the admiration of the world. One is supposed to have been designed by Giotto, originally a shepherd-boy. It was completed in 1330, by Andrea Pisarro. The upper part of the sculpture consists of events in the life of St. John; below, are allegorical figures; one of the best of which is Hope stretching forth her hand towards the celestial crown. When this gate was fixed in its place, the event was celebrated throughout Tuscany as a festival, and the honour of the rights of citizenship in Florence *was conferred* on Pisarro, as the highest

reward the city could bestow on one who had so greatly adorned it. The northern and eastern gates were added a hundred years afterwards. On the first are displayed the principal events in the life of our Lord; on the latter, and most beautiful, the leading events of the Old Testament, surrounded by an exquisite border of plants. Michael Angelo used to say that these gates were "worthy to be the gates of Paradise!"

Dante speaks of this building as though he delighted in it; although one of the many unjust charges from which he suffered in his troubled life was occasioned by his breaking part of the baptismal font. He says, that—

"In St. John's fair fane, by me beloved—
Those basins formed for water to baptize—
(One of the same I broke some years ago,

To save a drowning child: be *this* my word
A seal the motive of my deed to show!")
WRIGHT'S *Dante*

In the centre of the pavement is sculptured an image of the sun, and in the middle of the sun's orb is a point; and it is supposed that when the stone was in its original place, (from which, unluckily, it has been moved,) the rays of the sun shone exactly upon that spot at twelve o'clock on Midsummer's-day, the feast of St. John the Baptist, to whom the church was dedicated. All the baptisms of the city are still performed in this church.

Besides the cathedral and the baptistery, the open square is adorned by a very tall and beautiful *campanile*, or bell-tower, designed by Giotto, in 1334. *He is buried in* the cathedral near Bru-

nelleschi. On the southern side of the square is a flat flagstone, with the simple inscription, "Sasso di Dante:" "stone of Dante."

Dante died at Ravenna, and is there buried; so that his ungrateful country does not even possess his bones.

We visited the tomb of Michael Angelo in the fine church of Santa Croce, with much interest. Painter, sculptor, and architect, all in one, he is the glory of Italy; and Tuscany is proud of being his birth-place. He was the architect of St. Peter's at Rome, and designed that splendid building after he had entered his seventy-second year.

LETTER V.

FLOWERS AT FLORENCE — STORY OF GALILEO — OF LEONARDO DA VINCI — OF MADONNA PIA.

Florence, January 1.

MANY and happy new years to my beloved Louisa! Strange, indeed, has felt to me this new-year's day in a foreign land! Stranger still did Christmas day appear! Little or no difference seems made here between that and other holidays. To-day, throughout the Continent, is the day for giving presents, especially nosegays and sugar-plums; which latter are made in every sort of pretty shape you can fancy. Before I was up there came a little tap at my door, and Flora and Helen entered. Helen presented me

with a bunch of Narcissus (the daffodil of the poets). Flora had provided a splendid bunch of flowers for me from the flower-girl I have told you of. I fancy I can hear you and my aunt wondering what flowers we *could* have on new-year's day: so I will tell you what the posy was composed of—viz. tuberoses, China roses, camellias, violets; red and white carnations; honesty, mignonette, narcissuses, blue and white hyacinths, and leaves of the rose-geranium!

The roses here are beautiful; though mostly of the kind which we should call *China*, they seem of a deeper and brighter colour than ours, and certainly have far more fragrance. Mr. N. amused the children as they were picking up at breakfast-time some rose-leaves dropped from my nosegay, by telling them the

following story, which I repeat for your entertainment:—

"At Amadan in Persia, there was a famous academy, the rules of which were, that the members of it should think much, write little, and speak as seldom as possible. Zeb, a learned doctor, celebrated all over the East for his great knowledge, hearing of a vacancy in this institution, hastened to the city in order to be elected. Unfortunately he arrived too late, for the place had already been filled by a candidate who, like many in these times, owed his success to his power more than to his deserts. The president of the academy filled a vase so full of water, that an additional drop would make it run over, by which the doctor was to understand that their society was too full to admit of *another* member. The learned Zeb was

retiring sorrowfully, when by chance he perceived a petal of a rose at his feet, which he seized with promptness, and placed it so delicately on the top of the water, that it did not disturb the liquid in the least. This ingenious allusion was received by the assembly with the greatest applause; and the illustrious Zeb was unanimously received a member of the society."

We went to-day up to Fesolé, one of the places where Galileo used the telescope he had first used, if not entirely invented. Our own Milton visited it too, and in his "Paradise Lost" thus mentions it:—

"His ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening from the top of Fesolé,

Or in Val d'Arno, to descry new lands,
Rivers or mountains on her spotty globe."

The finger of Galileo I looked at a few days ago with intense curiosity. It is preserved in a glass-case in the magnificent Laurentian library here, and points upwards to those heavens he spent so much of his life in gazing at! It is a curious fact that our great Sir Isaac Newton was born in 1642, the year in which Galileo died.

We staid some time at Fesolé, looking about us in that ancient city. We walked in the gardens of a villa where Lorenzo de Medici "*the magnificent*" is supposed to have lived. It is a glorious sight!

January 16.

Time passes very fast here. The *carnival* has now begun, but we see little of it except on Sundays, when people walk about in all kinds of masks and strange dresses, which amuse the children greatly. I have been visiting a nunnery; it was a touching sight. The nuns showed us everything; and one who was once a great lady, and used to every luxury and comfort before she took the veil, said on pointing to the bare walls of her miserable cell, "That the smallness and desolate look of her only room, had been what she felt most painfully." These nuns receive female visitors, and educate young ladies; but may never pass the door, to the threshold of which they accompanied us! Not even in death may they pass it, for they have a burial-ground within their walls!

I have been, and am, exceedingly busy drawing. My present occupation in that way is sketching from a sort of covered balcony on the roof of our house, which has a fine view both up and down the Arno. To the right we see two bridges, the furthest of which, though reckoned perfectly beautiful as a piece of architecture, was formerly deemed so insecure, that no carriages were allowed to pass over it; but now every body goes over it fearlessly. In the room of the neighbouring house opposite to me, a girl was hanging up clothes to dry, and seemed much amused to see me hour after hour so intent on my sketch. The view to the left makes a separate picture, and perhaps a more interesting one than the other. We look in the first place full upon the Ponte Vecchio, or old bridge, which is roofed in, and lined

with shops on either side; a row of large round windows between the roof of the bridge and the tops of the houses give air and light, as well as three open arches on both sides in the centre of the bridge. Some way below this bridge is seen another, with single houses on it: this is called Ponte delle Grazie, or Bridge of the Graces. In the background rises a steep and beautiful hill, crowned by a convent and church, San Miniato, and to the left is a portion of the projecting roof of *the* Gallery. A row of cypresses marks the steep stony road up to San Miniato, which is encircled by very tall ones.

January 24.

We took a delightful walk yesterday, which you may trace in the sketch from our inn I have described above. We

went first along the river to the furthest bridge, by which we crossed it, and then proceeded, through dirty streets, to one of the gates of the town, also called San Miniato. We passed under its low dark archway, and soon got to the steep path we have so often gazed at from our windows. Up we went, and a most glorious view we had: Florence spread like a map at our feet!

We looked into the Gallery on our return, and saw the gorgeous room of *gems*. We were much interested in the collection of portraits of great painters, done by themselves. Amongst them is that of *Leonardo da Vinci*, a fine dark old head, which is esteemed one of his best and most carefully-painted works. He is famous for one beautiful painting, *(in a convent at* Milan,) of the last Supper

of our Lord. Numberless are the engravings and copies of this picture, and I am bringing home for you a flat white cast, with this design a little raised upon it. Our blessed Saviour is sitting at table in the midst of the apostles, and is supposed to have just exclaimed, "I say unto you that one of you shall betray me." The varied expressions of horror on the apostles' countenances are wondrously beautiful.

January 30.

I have made a sketch for you of an old woman spinning with the *rocca*, a pretty sort of distaff that they all use here. The young women walk about the country with the long stick of *rocca* stuck into their apron on the left side, and with their right hand, which is

held extended a little on one side, twirl the spindle merrily. By my old dame's side I have put a *marito*, or little earthenware basket. This is universally carried about by rich and poor; every woman has one, fills it with charcoal in winter days, and either carries it about in her arms, or sits down with her petticoats over it. The pasteboard top on the *rocca* is adorned with gold paper, ribbons, &c.

February 7.

We drove yesterday to see the villa at *Careggi*, where Lorenzo the Magnificent died; it is about three miles from Florence, on the Fesolé road. In the inner courtyard we saw the well into which the enraged people threw the doctor who had *failed* to keep Lorenzo alive. There is a

beautiful view from the villa, over the vale of Florence to the mountains beyond; and a very charming sort of covered balcony, or rather room, open at one end. The garden is pretty, and there are vineyards beyond it. An English artist was established here painting some large pictures, and had been here for some months: a very delicious life in summer, I should think! We were told he was just on the eve of departure, and did not see him, but went into his painting room, a sort of barn in the vineyard, where the orange-trees have been placed for the winter; so it looked very pretty and artist like, and in the midst of them was a huge head of Achilles sketched in charcoal on the wall. There was snow on the high hills as we came away, and the sunset was the finest I ever saw

—the most glorious golden glare of light extending along the hills, and the opposite range tinted with a purple bloom! The distant hills seemed to cross and recross each other in a blaze of light. We went up to the top of the villa, and walked in a large open gallery which runs all round the house. Into this gallery open large rooms, in which the grapes are kept.

February 8.

We are beginning to pack up to leave Florence. A great many masks walk the streets this carnival time, and keep the children in a constant state of excitement and amusement. Some have large heads, covering their own head and neck en*tirely, and* resting on their shoulders.

The profusion of double violets now is really delicious.

Sienna, February 12.

Mr. N. has engaged a vetturino, or driver, to take us to Rome with the same horses, sleeping at three places by the way. The road from Florence hither is not very pretty, the inn was uncomfortable, and the smoke excessive. Near this town we passed a large cross surrounded by cypresses; it is said to have been put up at that spot because several people were killed there, in a quarrel which took place amongst a party going home from a wedding. The crosses in this country have not the large painted representations of our Saviour's body on them which shocked us so much in France; but they

are covered with little images of the various instruments of his crucifixion. On this one we observed the spear; the sponge; a hand; a face, (said to be meant for our Saviour's); the ropes for the scourging; a plate; a vase for the wine; a cup; the hammer; the nails; the pincers; a lantern; a cloak or "garment;" the dice for casting lots; and the cock!

We went to see the cathedral of this city; there are some famous designs on the floor in black and white mosaic. The pulpit of white marble is a very fine specimen of carving; the columns are supported on marble lions devouring kids. In another fine church, called the church of Saint Dominic, we saw a very fine specimen of the mode of *painting* called *fresco*, in which the Ita-

lians so much excel. This is by an artist named Razzi, and represents a Roman Catholic legend of the life of St. Catherine, whose figure is supported by two nuns with flowing white drapery. Sienna contains a great number of paintings; and there are some *outside* the houses!

Radicofani, February 13.

This is a strange old rambling inn, on a wild and desolate mountain; the country round is all bleak and dreary, and the top of this mountain is said to be 2,470 feet above the level of the sea. There is an immense gallery up-stairs in this inn, into which all our bedrooms open. "When you want the waiter ring the bell," is painted on the wall in English, French, and Italian; the letters are half a

foot long, but there are no bells to ring in this wild house!

Viterbo, February 14.

In tracing our progress on the map, you will see that we passed to-day the division between Tuscany and the Pope's dominions. Part of our journey to-day was extremely beautiful, particularly the first town in the Pope's dominions, Acqua Pendente. You wind up a road to it amongst fine old oaks, and beautiful plants of many kinds; and it stands at the top of precipitous rocks, whence cascades of limpid water fall, dashing, and gleaming, into the valley below. A little beyond this lovely spot we came to the town and lake of Bolsena. The latter is a noble expanse of water, covering about *twenty*-six English miles. Here reigns

that scourge of the Roman states—the *malaria*, or "evil air," which spreads in a mysterious manner over great part of Rome, and the huge plain around it, or Campagna di Roma. Mr. N. told us that we should, in our journey to Rome to-morrow, see more traces of its effects than even in the utter desertion and wildness that reigns round the lake of Bolsena; and he described how all the peasants in the neighbourhood of Rome that were not obliged to stay and herd flocks on the Campagna, fled from their winter homes when the unwholesome months approached; and the few who remained bore living evidence in their pallid faces, and wasted forms, to the fatal power of that evil spirit which seems to lurk amidst the sunniest bowers in fertile Italy.

LETTER VI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ON ARRIVING AT ROME—OUR HOUSE AT ROME—SUNSET—ELLEN MACRIE.

"I am in Rome! Oft as the morning ray
Visits these eyes, waking at once I cry,
Whence this excess of joy? What has befallen me?
And from within a thrilling voice replies,
'I am in Rome!'"—ROGERS'S *Italy*.

Rome, Feb. 16.

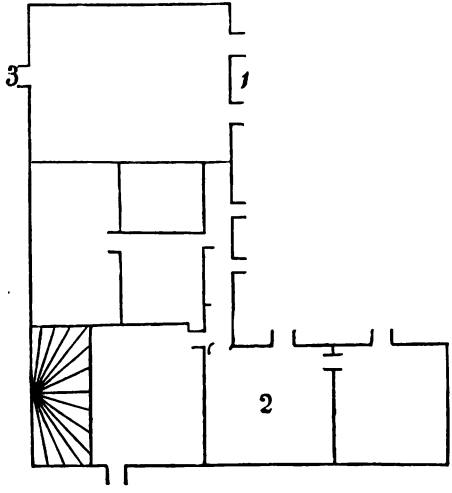
YESTERDAY, my dearest Louisa, we arrived in Rome! It is difficult, nay, impossible, to describe the various feelings that pressed upon us, when we first saw the dome of St. Peter's rising in the distance above the Campagna di Roma. Perhaps the most distinct sensation I experienced was that for the first time I was

ST. PETER'S.

going actually to set my foot in a place mentioned in the Bible: a place of which St. Paul had said, "*I must also see Rome;*" (Acts xix. 21;) and in which he had "dwelt two whole years." Acts xxviii. 30.

Entering through the Porta del Popolo, or "The People's Gate," gives you the impression that you are coming into a modern city, most of the ruins being on the other side of the Tiber. We established ourselves in our house yesterday, (22, Via Gregoriana,) which I must describe to you as well as I can. We preferred having a small house to ourselves to taking one floor in one of the immense Roman palazzi, or palaces, as is usually done by the English. The house we have got is on the top of the Pincian Hill, and commands a most lovely view over *Rome.* Our house is in the shape of an

L, and my room is in the shortest part of it, looking towards the little garden, which just makes the L into an oblong.



The back of the L forms what would be *called* the front of the house, as it looks to the street. The house is only two

stories high, and the passages and rooms up-stairs are floored with bricks; the staircase is of white marble! From my window I look upon the Pope's Palace of Monte Cavallo, on the Quirinal Hill, (one of the seven on which Rome was originally built;) in the horizon, to the right of it, stand out beautifully a cypress and stone pine; while the double row of orange-trees in the little garden beneath our house, loaded with rich yellow fruits, remind one both by sight and smell that we are actually in Italy. A succession of other gardens in narrow terraces, one below the other, reaches almost down the hill, and every one contains fragrant orange-trees. The drawing-room windows look all over Rome, with the large dome of St. Peter towering in the dis*tance over* every other object. I must

endeavour to give you some idea of both views in a pencil sketch; for no colours *I* could use could adequately represent to you the rich, clear, deep-blue sky that forms the vault of heaven over those lovely scenes.

We seldom see a cloud; and when we do, it is generally at sunset, when they take the most gorgeous hues from the setting-sun. This evening, for instance, after returning from a walk on the summit of the Pincian Hill, we beheld it sink behind the dome of St. Peter's, tinting for a moment the outline of the whole dome with a light rose-colour of the brightest hue, and leaving every imaginable tinge of purple, red, and orange-colour, on the few light clouds that floated here and there in the vast expanse.

At sunset, I think, thoughts of home and friends are apt to come with a soft sadness, even to those who like ourselves are travelling, with every means of enjoyment, in this most delightful country. How deeply sad I often think must be their yearnings for home, who are sent here by their physician as a last hope, and on whose hectic cheeks I often look with a feeling of the deepest compassion as I see them gradually getting worse, far from their friends and country, in a land of strangers!

"But lo! the sun is setting;—earth and sky
One blaze of glory! What we saw but now,
As though it were not, though it had not been!
He lingers yet; and, lessening to a point,
Shines like the eye of Heaven,—then withdraws;
And from the zenith to the utmost skirts,
All is celestial red! The hour is come,
When they that sail along the distant seas

Languish for home; and they that in the morn
Said to sweet friends, 'Farewell,' melt as at
parting;
When, just gone forth, the pilgrim, if he hears,
As now we hear it—echoing round the hill
The bell that seems to mourn the dying day,
Slackens his pace and sighs, and those he loved
Loves more than ever. But who feels it not?
And well may *we*, for we are far away!"

ROGERS'S *Italy*.

LETTER VII.

ST. PETER'S—FOUNTAINS OF ROME—MORRA.

Rome, Feb. 28.

THIS morning, my dearest sister, we spent in St. Peter's; and though I feel one must go there again and again to see and understand half the beauties it contains, yet I will at once sit down, and try and describe to you our first visit.

The immediate front of St. Peter's is so high that it hides the dome entirely from sight as you approach the church between two splendid fountains which throw the water up to a great height into the clear air, which sparkles with rainbow *colours as it* splashes down again into the

basin. In the midst of the open square stands an old obelisk, so tall and taper that it almost seems to touch the sky. It was brought from Egypt originally by the cruel Roman emperor, Caligula.

Having gone up a flight of marble steps, we reached the entrance, or rather the three entrances. The middle gates are never opened except to admit the Pope on high festival. The entrances to the right and left are open, or at least only closed (like most other Italian churches) by a very heavy and particularly dirty curtain. With some difficulty we raised it,—it swung aside,—and, lo, we stood in St. Peter's itself! The church felt warm, and the air was balmy with the sweet smell of the incense, burnt daily when the mass is performed. The atmosphere of summer seems to linger

throughout the winter in this immense building; and we were told it is proportionably cool in the great heats. St. Peter's is in the shape of a huge cross; and in the centre of the cross is the tomb where St. Peter is said to be buried. The canopy above the vault (where a hundred lamps are incessantly burning) is supported by four brazen pillars covered with golden foliage, and is one hundred and thirty feet in height; though from the stupendous dome that rises above it, it looks so small that the only way to convince oneself of its real size is to compare it with one's fellow mortals, who look like pigmies as they creep about the pavement! The internal height of the dome is four hundred feet.

I believe I am not wrong in telling you that this is the largest building of man's

raising on the face of the earth:—certainly it is the richest; for the treasures of art collected in it are of inestimable value; besides the precious materials—marbles and bronze, gold and silver, unsparingly scattered around.

I cannot tell you how oppressive is the feeling of one's own insignificance on entering for the first time this grand and enduring monument of man's power. It increases every moment as one walks up the nave, which is divided into three by a row of colossal columns on either side the central door, and is at its climax when one stands at the high altar, looking alternately up at the dome, and down into the subterranean chapel!

There are innumerable chapels at the sides of St. Peter's, each containing a separate altar, with its candles, pictures, &c.

At one of these a mass was being performed whilst we were walking round the church. Incense boats were swung by two boys; and the priests' many-coloured and richly-embroidered garments had a gorgeous appearance as they knelt, and rose, and bowed, and turned, in all the variety of gesture prescribed by their Church. Then the choir intoned a solemn chaunt; it was exquisitely sung, and we paused as if rivetted to the spot we were standing on, while the delicious music came sweeping by us in gusts of harmony, and echoed on through the long arches, till it seemed to melt away in the vastness of the dome. Yet though we now beheld the ritual of the Roman faith performed in its utmost perfection, with every advantage its various appeals to the senses of sight, smell,

and hearing, could attain, I never felt more thankful for the pure rites of our own Church, performed in a language her people understand; and this feeling was heightened by the disgust with which I saw the priests, the singing men, and a long train of boys clad in purple, as they swept along the church in procession when the service was over, go up, one by one, with gestures of adoration, and kiss the toe of a large black bronze image which stands on a pedestal near the high altar! The statue is in a sitting position, one foot advanced; and the toe of that foot is nearly worn away—hard metal as it is—by the constant kissing it is exposed to!

Many poor people are constantly kneeling before it in the attitude of prayer; and you cannot be many minutes in St. Peter's without seeing some one go up

to the statue, which is now said to represent St. Peter, but many think received worship in the pagan days of Rome, under the name of Jupiter.

On St. Peter's-day it is dressed up in gorgeous robes, out of which its black face must peer curiously enough!—while a gemmed tiara is placed on the head, and soldiers keep guard, and candles burn before it! Leaving the building we walked round the fountains in front of it, and gazed through their splashing waters at the front of St. Peter's. Then, before returning home, we drove to the Fountain of Trevi, and, getting out of the carriage, lingered long by its cool freshness.

By descending the steps, which lead into a space railed out all round this immense fountain, one is safe from all

interruption by passing carriages and horses. This is the largest fountain in Rome; and its waters gush over huge pieces of rock, in the middle of which, on a high pedestal, stands a statue of Neptune, surrounded by stone figures of sea-horses and tritons.

The fountains of Rome and its neighbourhood are the favourite resort of the poor people round; and many a group of them did we see, chiefly women, who, collected in little knots, stood in earnest conversation; their beautifully-shaped earthen pitchers, and vases, resting in their emptiness meantime on the stone edge of the fountain. Some there are who bring their infants with them, strapped into little open baskets made of the osiers that grow by the yellow Tiber, and balanced skilfully on the head, while

their busy hands ply a small spindle which hangs from a distaff fastened at their side.

The dress of the women is very pretty: a white thick cloth, often fringed with gold, is hung upon the back of their heads, neatly folded, and coming over the top of the head. At the sides their beautiful black hair is seen, generally skilfully braided, and fastened up with a silver pin; sometimes it is confined by a red silk net. Their bodice is of rich figured silk, or coloured velvet, often laced at either side with gold; and their long sleeves, as white as their neckerchief, are tied up with coloured ribbons. Their petticoat is short and full, often of coloured satin; and sometimes they have a rich apron, fringed with gold, like the head-dress. Large gold ear-rings, and a *row* or two of beads, with a cross or

crucifix hanging from them, complete the holiday attire of a Roman country-woman. But one sees great variety in their dress, as many from the neighbouring provinces are often coming into Rome, and each has some peculiarity of attire. The bright colours they are so fond of selecting look brighter still in this clear air, and strong sunlight.

Anon we are disturbed in our contemplations of the splashing waters by a sound of pipe and tabor;—and with a crowd of idle men, women, and children at his heels, there comes a dancing-bear, with his leader, or "bearward," as they were called in England in the olden time, when such a sight was far more frequent there than it is now.

They are yet, however, often to be seen in the Eternal City; and the leaders are

generally natives of the duchy of Parma, and travel about with their beasts, or, as the poorer people here express it, "Go about the world with the comedy;" and having gained enough money to buy a vineyard, or furnish a cottage, by the hardly-earned and carefully-spared fruits of their wanderings, they add to the sum the most they can get by selling the bear himself, and then settle down in quiet for the rest of their lives; while their adventures in foreign lands are sure to be perpetually told over to never-tiring audiences.

By-and-by our attention is attracted by a great uproar near to the opposite side of the fountain; and we soon see it is excited by a difference between two men who are playing the game of "*morra.*" Bystanders are called in as

umpires, and gradually the uproar ceases, and the players continue their game, which so often leads to serious quarrels, and even murders, by the ever-ready knives of the hot-blooded Italians, that Government have been trying, though in vain, to put it down. The numbers are shouted out with such extraordinary rapidity, that it is often impossible for inexperienced ears to distinguish between them. This game is mentioned in very ancient Roman writers, as "micare digitis," or "flashing fingers," which is very descriptive of it. It is played as follows:—

"Two men, or boys, (women never play) place themselves opposite to each other, and at the same instant each throws out his right hand, with so many fingers open, and so many shut, or bent upon the palm; and each of the players,

also at the same instant, cries out the number made by adding his adversary's open fingers to his own. If both cry right, of course the throw counts for nothing. This may seem a very childish and easy game; but the difficulty of it is far greater than can well be conceived, without seeing it played; and success in the game does not depend upon chance, but upon superior quickness of sight. Each player knows the number of fingers he himself throws out; but he must catch at a glance the number thrown out by his adversary, whose movements, like his own, are quick as lightning; and as he sees, he must call out the joint number, his adversary doing the same. The fingers are now open, now shut; the hand is now in the air, and now at the *side; and* throw follows throw, and call

follows call, as quick as the muscles can move or the tongue speak. The first time I saw the game played, I was amazed at this rapidity, and at the loud voices and excited, passionate expression of the players, who were only playing for about a pennyworth of wine. Their eyes flashed, and their voices sounded like the simultaneous discharge of a brace of loud pistols; it being scarcely possible, to my unpractised eye or ear, either to see the number of fingers opened, or distinguish the number called, or even who cried one number, and who another. But two bystanders, who acted as judges, and who were almost equally excited, seemed to make the distinction very well. When the first game was decided, which happened in a very few seconds, the two fellows played another; and, getting

more and more inflamed, they went on throwing out hands and fingers, and bawling numbers, till their voices were hoarse, and their arms so tired, they could no longer keep up the rapid movement. As a man gains a point by hitting the right number, he marks it with a finger of his left hand, which hand is kept motionless, but generally raised above the shoulder. Five points make the game; and when the thumb and four fingers of the left hand are all expanded, then the lucky owner of that hand cuts a caper, and sometimes cries, 'Done!' or 'I have conquered!'

"Not once, but many a time, have I seen the losing party, in his mad spite, bite the fingers of his right hand until the blood came!" *

* *Macfarlane's* Popular Customs, p. 108.

So pleasant a place is this fountain of Trevi, with its broad rocks, and gushing waters, and varied groups, that we were quite sorry to leave it, to return to our house. To-day was very hot; but they say the heat now is nothing to what it becomes in April and May.

Ever, dear Louisa,

Your most affectionate Sister.

LETTER VIII.

PAMFILI DORIA GARDENS—BIRD-MARKET.

Rome, March 4.

THIS day, my dear Louisa, we have spent in the gardens belonging to the Pamfili Doria palace. A glorious place, indeed, it was, with a bright sun shining, and a soft balmy breeze rejoicing our hearts. We greatly admired some magnificent bay-trees:—this tree is the *laurel* of the ancients, and is reckoned to this day to have some curious properties;—one is, to preserve from lightning; and to this day the peasants in the Pyrennees cover themselves with its branches, as a security

in a thunder-storm. The ancients also attributed to it the property of preserving corn from mildew. Its large glossy green leaves have such a fragrant smell, one cannot wonder at people fancying they keep off contagious illness. We gathered some of its ripe berries, and mean to try and plant them in England when we return, where there are already many fine trees of it, especially one at Tarring, in Sussex.

There is a great smooth expanse of green turf in the middle of the gardens, quite bright with many-coloured anemones in full blow. It is the same kind as our broad-leaved garden anemone, with single flowers; and they are quite wild here, and push their way up through the turf-like weeds. Our English purple "Pasque-flower," which grows wild in

several counties in England (where the soil is chalky), is of this species. White, red, and lilac, in various shades, are the principal colours here; and very gay they look.

The grounds of this palace are generously open at all times to the public;—the marble fountains, with their gushing spray of coolness; the noble groves of *stone-pines*, with their tall red stems and flat green tops; and the arched evergreen walk, through which is seen in the distance the colossal dome of St. Peter's, are never-ending sources of delight. Blackbirds and thrushes are now singing here in abundance; and we are told, that in April these walks resound with the delicious notes of the nightingale.

In the huge old stone-pines in these *gardens* several kinds of birds take up

their abode. The jackdaw nestles there: and the hooded crow may occasionally be seen about; while starlings innumerable breed in them; and the *roller*, or "pica marina," here seeks his food.*

Mr. N. is very fond of watching the habits of birds, and was delighted to see the roller, and to show the children the bright colours on his wing, alluded to in Virgil. He has just procured Mr. Waterton's "Essays on Natural History;" and we have been reading, with great interest, those parts of it in which mention is made of Italy. Many birds of passage, that do not come so far north as England, spend their summer here, returning for the winter to a still hotter country than this. The roller is about the size of the jay, and very bright in its colours;—the

* Order II. genus 3. *Coracias garrula*, Linnæus.

top of the head is bright deep blue; the neck, and all the under part of the bird, is green; the tail green, except the two middle feathers, which are of that same beautiful blue which is also on the upper part of the wings, the rest being dark brown. The beak is long and sharp. This bird builds in the holes of old trees, and lays five eggs, of a clear green colour, with dark spots.*

The birds in the Pamfili Doria gardens

* "This bird returns to Africa, when the summer is ended. It is said to have been seen as far north as England. The flight of this bird puts one in mind of our own rook, when in the act of shooting downwards from on high. He rises perpendicularly, and then comes down in rapid zigzags; during which time, if you get betwixt the sun and him, you have a magnificent view of his lovely plumage. His voice has something in it of the united notes of the jay and magpie."—*Waterton's Essays, vol. ii.*

are not allowed to be disturbed or caught (like most in the country round, where one seldom sees any) for the bird-market at Rome. There may be found here occasionally the beautiful Golden oriole, which is about the size of our thrush; but has a stronger, thicker beak. The whole of the body of this bird is of a rich golden yellow,—a few feathers round the eyes, the wings, and the middle tail feathers only excepted, which are of a deep brown, shaded into black.* The nest is said to be very curious, though we were not fortunate enough to find one; it is somewhat in the shape of a purse, and hangs from the extreme fork of the outer branches of tall trees. The eggs, four or five in number, are of a dull

* Order II. genus 4. *Oriolus gabbula*, Linnæus.

white, marked with small dark brown spots.

The *bee-eater* is also found in and about these grounds. It is exceedingly beautiful, and has a long black curved bill. Its plumage is a dazzling mixture of green, blue, yellow, and a sort of red orange colour which is very peculiar. Its food consists of insects, particularly bees. A flight of them were twice seen in England, in the county of Norfolk, in the year 1794; but Mr. N. says, never, that he heard of, at any other time. *

On returning from Villa Panfili Doria we visited the bird market, near the Pantheon, now called the Rotunda—a curious scene, indeed, in the large open square opposite that round temple with

* Order II. genus 5. Common bee-eater. *Merops Apiaster*, Linnæus.

its beautiful portico. It is one of the most perfect remains of heathen times, and, though now converted into a Christian church, continues open to the air and sky in a large circle at the top of the dome, the only way it is lighted, as there are no windows. The Coliseum in London gives you a very good idea of its outward appearance.

On the stalls of the sellers in the market may be seen all the birds found in this country, (for the Romans have no scruple of eating all the little singing birds they can catch,) even robin red-breasts may be seen ready trussed for the spit. Mr. Waterton mentions that he counted four hundred thrushes and blackbirds together in this market, as well as larks and ringdoves. This destruction of little birds accounts for the scarcity of them

which we have remarked ever since we entered Italy. In our journey from Florence hither, I think we only saw a heron or two, a few blackbirds, and some hooded crows, which the children greatly lamented, but were no longer surprised at, when they walked through the market and saw them in the stalls in such quantities. There were snipes, woodcocks, dabchicks, golden plovers, wagtails, titmice of all sorts, jays, magpies, hooded crows, larks, falcons, woodpeckers, golden crested and common wrens, waterhens, bitterns, bullfinches, sparrows, rollers, bee-eaters, orides, and canary birds, besides various others too numerous to mention.

Wild looking Italian peasants, with bandit-like faces, and long black hair, *stood by* their stalls exhorting the chil-

dren to come near and look at their curious birds; but we were most amused with the *civetta*, or little Italian owl, which was to be sold alive at several of the stalls, performing its curious gesticulations incessantly, to the amusement of several persons collected around.* It is much prized by the gardeners of Italy for its uncommon cleverness in killing insects and reptiles. There is hardly an outhouse in the gardens and vineyards here, that has not a little owl kept in it.†

* See Waterton's Essays on Natural History, part ii. p. 15.

† This little owl seems to agree as to plumage with the description of the small burrowing owl in Wilson's American Ornithology. "On these immense plains the marmots, or prairie-dogs, congregate together, and make themselves villages of underground houses dug out by their own patient labour. These villages are sometimes miles long. Each abode is composed of a mound about two

It is often brought up tame from the nest, and in September sold for a dollar to sportsmen, who take it with them in their excursions through the country after larks and robins, and such small game.

feet wide at the base, and seldom rising more than eighteen inches above the soil. From the entrance a passage slopes down into the earth for the depth of one or two feet, ending in an apartment within which the industrious marmot makes himself a sort of nest or cell to sleep in through the winter. This cell, which is composed of fine dry grass, is globular in form, with an opening at top; the whole is so firmly put together it might without injury be rolled over the floor. In all these villages the little owls take up their abode; some think they live *with* the marmot in their houses, others that they take possession of forsaken ones only; but however that may be, there sit the little owls, at the door of the mounds, bobbing their heads, and blinking their eyes, and at a little distance may be mistaken for the marmots themselves *sitting* on their hind legs."

Perched on the top of a pole, it attracts their notice by its most singular gestures, and thus they are often lured within reach of the fatal gun. Standing bolt upright, it curtsies incessantly, with its head somewhat inclined forwards, whilst it keeps its eyes fixed on the approaching object. This odd movement is peculiar to the civetta alone. Its flesh is relished by the natives of Italy; and you may see it plucked and ready to be roasted, on the same stall at which hawks, crows, buzzards, jackdaws, hedgehogs, frogs, and snails, are offered for sale to those who frequent the market in search of such delicacies.

You will be able to form some notion of the looks of this funny little owl from a very exquisite little bronze one Mr. N. bought in a great market in Rome

Navona, and gave to me. It is not far from the bird market; and there are all sorts of odd things to be met with in it for sale, dug up, from time to time, in some of the innumerable ruins that have been excavated in the neighbourhood. I am sure the little fellow must be very old, and the indentations of his feathers are done with wonderful delicacy.

Wild boars, killed on the adjacent plains, are also to be bought in the market; and porcupines (which look like cats, when divested of their quills) are also there, in company with red deer, rabbits, foxes, goats, and kids.

LETTER IX.

THE CATACOMBS—THE COLISEUM.

March 23.

We took a most interesting walk yesterday through a part of the catacombs, or underground galleries, where during many years the early Christians took refuge from their persecutors. These subterranean passages go for miles and miles under the soil surrounding the city of Rome! It is supposed they were originally dug to provide materials for building Rome, and that the Christians took possession of them, and enlarged them greatly. They intersect each other in all ways, and an attempt to penetrate far into them is attended with danger, for if the torches the guides carry to show

the way were to go out, and the end of a huge ball of thread left at the entrance, which one of them always holds in his hand, were to be lost, it would be impossible to find the way out of this labyrinth! Many an inquisitive person going without proper precautions has miserably perished there. There are several entrances to these catacombs, and they are here and there open to the blue sky, but this is only at long intervals.

The galleries *we* were in are said to extend fifteen miles; and there are several other catacombs, and probably some yet undiscovered. The whole of the catacombs were forgotten and lost sight of for hundreds of years; and they were re-discovered in the 16th century, when intense interest was excited by the tombs, inscriptions, and remains, that were found, all

testifying to the pure faith, and dreadful sufferings, of the early Christians. Mr. Maitland (who wrote a book on "The Church in the Catacombs") calls them (as well he may) a stupendous testimony to the truth of Christian history; a faithful record of the trials of a persecuted Church! About 350 years after our Saviour's death, St. Jerome wrote the following interesting account of the retreat of those poor persecuted Christians. "When I was at Rome," he says, "still a youth, I was accustomed with others of my own age, actuated by the same feelings, to visit on Sundays the tombs of the apostles and martyrs, and often to go down into the crypts dug in the heart of the earth, where the walls on either side are lined with the dead; and so intense is the darkness that we realized the words of

the prophet, 'They go down alive into hell,' (or hades); and here and there a scanty aperture, ill deserving the name of window, admits scarcely light enough to mitigate the gloom which reigns below; and as we advance through the shades with cautious steps, we are forcibly reminded of the words, 'horror on all sides; even the silence terrifies the mind.'"

Here, then, the Christians secretly assembled, and here many of them were buried; their inscriptions recording the joy with which they quitted this troublesome life in the hope of a happy eternity, through the imputed merits of that Saviour in whom they believed. Can we imagine them performing the pure rites of the Christian religion in those dark galleries and chambers, lined with the *tombs* of their departed friends? while

even there they were not safe; some of their number being occasionally seized by their enemies in the midst of their devotions, as one of their inscriptions plainly shows!

INSCRIPTION.

"In Christ, Alexander is not dead, but lives beyond the stars: his body rests in this tomb. He lived under the Emperor Antonine ( ), who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good. For while on his knees, and about to sacrifice to the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times! in which sacred rites and prayers even in caverns afford no protection to us. What can be more wretched than such a life! And what than such a death! when they could not be buried by their friends and relations. At length they sparkle in heaven. He has scarcely lived who has lived in Christian times."*

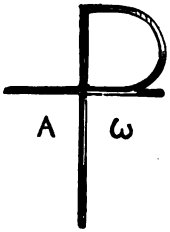
Many are the emblems graven on their tombs; some of which we cannot now, so many hundred years after them, under-

* Maitland.

stand the meaning of, but many of which are still intelligible.*

* The ship to represent the church; the anchor, an emblem of hope; the stag to show "the hart that panteth after the water-brooks;" the hare, the timid Christian hunted by persecutors; the lion, the emblem of the tribe of Judah; the dove indicating the simplicity, and the cock the vigilance, of the Christian; the peacock and the phœnix, emblems of the resurrection; the vine, the olive-branch, the palm, and the Lamb. Some bear the signs of martyrdom, and one only a rudely sculptured view of a man devoured by wild beasts. These are the simple memorials by which devotion endeavoured to hallow the tombs of the departed, and inscribe upon them the unfading hopes which lie beyond the grave. Even the cross itself, that primal symbol of Christianity, which for ages was used in its simplest form, seemed to convey to their minds nothing depressing or melancholy: they adorned it with crowns and flowers, as if rather a sign of all that was cheerful and inspiring.—*Christmas Holidays in Rome*, p. 160.

is one of the most common epitaphs, if I may so call it, the cross forming part of the letter N, and meaning to say, "In peace and in Christ;" that is, *so* did he die whose burying place this records.



is another inscription, and means the first two letters of the name of Christ in Greek, joined with the first and last letters of the alphabet, for Alpha and Omega, or "*the beginning* and the end."

Most of the stones with inscriptions on them have been removed from hence (for their greater preservation) to the galleries of the Vatican.

How I wished you could be with us, dearest Louisa, as we roamed through these solemn chambers of the dead, with the remains of the early martyrs on each side of us! Truly they "being dead still speak." They tell us of their simple faith by the changeless emblems cut in the rock! We each had a light when we descended into these galleries down a flight of well-worn stone steps, at the bottom of which we entered the catacombs. These damp winding passages are generally ranged one above another in three stories, which makes them all the more intricate from the many stairs *that go up* and down. They are often *not more than* three feet wide, and so

low that sometimes we could not walk upright. Occasionally, however, they expand into apartments, arched over head, and large enough to contain a small company. On each side were cavities in which were placed the bodies of the dead, or niches for the urns containing their ashes, and here and there small apertures where lamps were found.*

* "Few sarcophagi were found here, for no pomp or ceremony attended the burial of the early Christians when their friends hastily laid them in these dark vaults. They sought not the sculptured marble to enclose their remains, but were contented with the rude emblems carved above, merely to show that for the body resting there they expected a share in the glory of the resurrection. Very many graves were those of children; and sometimes a whole family were interred together. The cavities were cut into the soft stone, just large enough for the body, with a semicircular excavation for the head, and

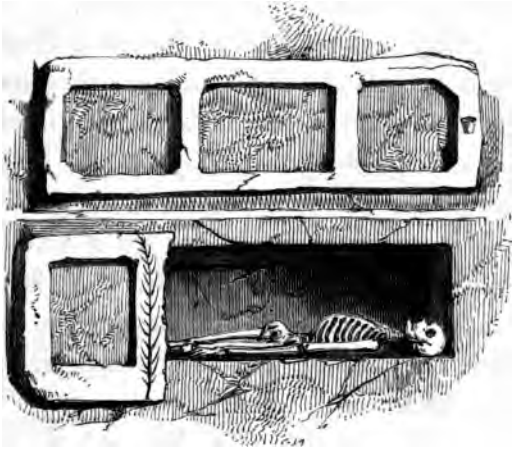
The cross, with a garland or a crown round it, is often seen on these monuments.

the opening was closed with a thin marble."—*Christmas Holidays*, p. 160.

"Our guide pointed out to us, as we passed along, some tombs which had never been opened, and whose inmates had been left to slumber on as seventeen centuries ago they were laid to their rest. There was one, the thin marble side of which had been cracked, so that he could insert a small taper. He bid us look in, and there we saw the remains of the skeleton, lying as it was placed by its brethren of the faith in those early days of persecution and trial. In those gloomy caverns the followers of our Lord were then accustomed to meet thus in secret to eat the bread of life, and with tears to drink the water of life. In one of these little chapels were found still remaining a simple earthen altar, and an antique cross[1] set in the rock above it. It was with no

[1] It is worthy of remark that in none of these early monuments are found any of those representations that shock us so much in the Roman Catholic churches of these days. I mean pictures of God the Father himself; *crucifixes* with the body of our Saviour represented nailed

Interested and delighted as we all had been with our walk, we were not



ordinary feelings that we stood on this spot, and looked on these evidences of early worship. They

in agony on the cross; or images of the Virgin Mary. The early Church evidently viewed these subjects with a reverence too deep to allow its members to attempt any representation of them, to say nothing of the daring impiety of attempting to pourtray the first of these subjects.

sorry to remount the worn steps, and find ourselves again in the church of St. Sebastian, whence we had descended.

Many of the corners we turned in these intricate passages were marked with white paint as a guide; but any sudden gush of air extinguishing our lamps would have made these marks useless: and our guide told us, that some years ago a whole school of nearly thirty youths, with their teacher, entered these catacombs on a visit of curiosity, and never reappeared; all search was in vain!

In the evening Mr. N. read to us the following verses out of St. Paul's

had remained here, perhaps, unchanged since the days of the apostles, and where we then were men may have bowed in prayer who had themselves seen their Lord in the flesh!"—*Christmas Holidays, p. 165.*

Epistle to the Hebrews, which did, indeed, seem to apply most wonderfully to what we had been seeing. "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy)—they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, *and in dens and caves of the earth.*" * "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which

* Heb. xi. 35—38.

doth so easily beset us; and let us run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." *

April 3d.

I cannot conclude this rather grave letter better, I think, dear sister, than by giving you an account of that magnificent ruin the Coliseum, which we visited yesterday evening by the most brilliant moonlight you can imagine! "The sun of Italy," says Madame de Staël, "should shine on festivals; but the moon is the light for ruins!" This immense amphitheatre was completed by Titus, it is said, in the year of our Lord 80, ten years after the destruction of Jerusalem; and even

* Heb. xii. 1, 2.

now, nearly 1800 years afterwards, though about two-thirds of the building are supposed to have entirely disappeared; though popes endeavoured to turn it into a manufactory;* though palaces have been built from its spoils, and rival families quarrelled for its very stones — it still remains the most magnificent of Rome's magnificent ruins!

The outside did consist of four stories, the three lower being composed of arches supported by half columns; the fourth a solid wall faced with pilasters, and pierced with forty windows; at the summit of the northern side, now the most perfect, many of the stones which projected (to support the poles of a huge awning stretched over the amphitheatre) still remain. The height of the outer wall is

* Sixtus V. and Clement XI.

157 English feet; the shape inside is an oval—the arena is now covered with a carpet of the greenest grass, from which rise traces of the huge rows of seats, that once ascended gradually from the ground, sloping one behind another to the top! Galleries ran all round behind the seats, with entrances in regular order, so that the immense crowd might pour in and out without confusion. It is supposed to have held 87,000 spectators! In the midst of the arena stood the unfortunate victims; and from the dark dens under the galleries, the fiercest wild beasts that could be imported from Africa and other countries were let loose upon them! These were called the Roman games! Emperors sat to gaze upon the horrid agonies of their victims, and women sat by and applauded at the sight.

Here numbers of the early martyrs expired in tortures for the Christian faith: and a feeling of intense awe came over us, as we stood in the place where so many had shed their blood; and gazed up on the huge walls and galleries, *now* dark and deserted except where the clear moonlight poured in through arch and window; but *then* teeming from top to bottom with human faces, whose eyes, all fixed upon their victims, glared eagerly with thirst for their blood! In the reign of Trajan, St. Ignatius was brought from Antioch purposely to be devoured by wild beasts in the Coliseum; and the Roman Church tells many a strange legend of miraculous help vouchsafed to those who patiently suffered here.

A large cross now stands in the centre

of the green grass inside the Coliseum, and all good Roman Catholics believe that kissing this cross procures them a certain degree of "*indulgence*," or (I dare hardly write such words)—a remission hereafter from the Almighty of part of the punishment due to their sins! I can quite fancy your exclaiming, "This is hardly possible;" but I assure you, not only was the fact written upon a paper nailed to the cross; but you can never visit the Coliseum without seeing people come up to kiss it! We roamed long about the crumbling ruins, pushing aside the wild olive, the myrtle, and the fig-tree, which have rooted amongst the old galleries, and occasionally impede the way; while every now and then the silence of the place was startled by the warning cry *of the guide* to beware of some black

hole, or yawning chasm in the brickwork, close to our feet.*

The hooting of an owl resounded at

* "Fortunately, we came too early, and therefore had an opportunity of seeing the effect produced, as the broad deep shadow which the giant building cast was gradually retreating before the light. When we arrived, the moon was just high enough to silver one edge of the ruin, while the rest was left in darkness. All was silent around, except the step of the solitary sentinel who was pacing the arena, and the murmur which arose at times from the neighbouring city. And there we waited as the queen of night—so glorious in the clearness of an Italian sky—gradually mounted up, and tinged row after row of the terraces on which once the spectators sat, the contrast of her silvery lines and the deep shadows of the vaults beneath, producing an effect of which no idea can be conveyed in the cold language of prose. The dark trees, waving above the broken arches, stood out in bolder relief, and the rents in the shattered battlements became more apparent, as the light streamed through them."—*Christmas Holidays*, p. 125.

intervals, prolonged by the echoes, and seemed to proceed from the palace of the Cæsars, the ruins of which cover a piece of ground a mile and a half in circuit, and are not far from the Coliseum. Altogether, it was a never-to-be-forgotten scene. This morning we revisited it by a bright sunshine, with the impression of our moonlight visit yet strong upon our minds. It is beautiful at any season! We were particularly struck by the brilliancy of the single yellow wallflowers, growing on the broken tops of arch and pilaster, and shining out *so sharp* against the blue sky! In spite of the plunder of its stones, and all its various misfortunes, this noble building appears likely to remain standing for many years.* A Roman bota-

* "The first mention of the name *Coliseum occurs in the* 'Fragments' of the Venerable Bede,

nist (Professor Sebastiani) has published a quarto volume called Flora Colisea, in which he proves that 260 various kinds of plants are found amongst these ruins. Two-thirds of these are mosses and lichens, and most of the remainder varieties of the vetch tribe.

We turned again and again to look back on the great Coliseum as we left it, and again and again as we walked through the large open space around it; and then we walked through the Forum—the old Roman Forum,—the ground looking

who records the famous prophecy of the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims:—

"While stands the Coliseum Rome shall stand,
When falls the Coliseum Rome shall fall,
And when Rome falls, the world."

MURRAY'S *Hand Book.*

barren and dry, and half excavated, half in heaps. Still, amidst it all, beautiful ruins raise their heads with sharp cornices, making hard lines in the warm sunshine; and remains of temples, single columns, and arches, are a daily puzzle to learned antiquarians, who spend their lives in trying to follow, step by step, traces of the splendour that has been.

Most interesting of all to us was the Arch of Titus, erected by the senate and people to commemorate the conquest of Jerusalem! It is of Greek marble, with fluted columns on each side, and beautifully carved with all kinds of figures. On one side we saw, still perfect in the enduring marble, the representation of a procession bearing the spoils of the temple at Jerusalem; among which the golden

ARCH OF TITUS.

table, the seven-branched candlestick, and the silver trumpets, may clearly be recognised !*

* "The day before yesterday we walked home through the Campo Vaccino. We were in haste, and did not stop to look at the old ruins; but were attracted by some groups of peasants come in from the neighbouring country, and assembled near the arch of Septimius Severus. There are two or three wheelwright's shops near there; and the peasants whose vehicles want any repair frequent the spot. Some were stretched on their backs fast asleep as we passed, and others lying flat on their stomachs, head to head, and, their chins resting on their elbows, were talking to each other. Near the peasants were ranged their empty carts, and patient oxen; the latter yoked in couples together, and feeding on hay strewed on the ground for them.

"Among the groups of oxen in the Campo Vaccino, there are not unfrequently to be seen also pairs of buffaloes, which, though commonly used as beasts of draught all over the country, *are extraordi*narily wild-looking brutes, and ap-

pear not unfrequently covered with a coat of hard dried mud, collected in the pools or bogs where they delight to wallow, like hogs. In addition to their savage sylvan aspect, tawny hide, and revengeful eye, the short crumpled semi-circular horn, inclining backwards, like the ears of a vicious horse, imparts a singular sinister expression to the countenance; and after all they are of a treacherous, half-domesticated nature, invariably maintaining in their race one attribute of wild, in contradistinction to domesticated animals, that of preserving the same figure, and very nearly the same size; and as they are hardly to be approached with impunity, except by their drivers, each pair, as soon as detached from harness, are made fast by a strong rope to the vehicle."—*A Tour of Many Days, by Sir George Head*, vol. ii. p. 88.

LETTER X.

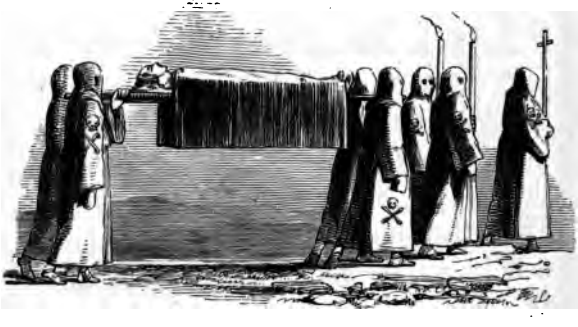
BURIAL OF THE DEAD BY NIGHT—STORY OF TORQUATO TASSO—LIZARDS.

Viâ Gregoriana, April 14th.

BEFORE you receive this letter, my dear Louisa, you will have heard parts, at least, of the long letter I sent to my aunt with the account of our Easter week, and of the many ceremonies of the Romish Church we witnessed in it. I was heartily wearied with the ceremonies before all was over; and I was disgusted with some of them: and the mere acting, for such it appeared to be regarded even by most of the Romans themselves, was *very* painful when one considered the

solemn events they are intended to commemorate! The melody of the "Miserere" in the Pope's chapel is one of two things during the week I dwell on with most delight, now that all is over and become as a dream that is past. I never heard anything more *angelic* than the voices of that small but perfect choir, singing unassisted by any instrument. That beautiful psalm, "Lord, have mercy, have mercy upon us," thrilled to my very heart, though the words were sung in Latin. The other thing I remember with most delight, was the illumination of St. Peter's. We drove to the great area in front of it, and, standing still in hearing of the plashing fountains, gazed upwards expecting the illumination to begin; at last lamps appeared, tracing out every line of the architecture, even to the very summit

of the great dome, with delicate little rows of balls of fire. Another half-hour and these all blazed out into flaming torches, and the whole was a vast dome of fire rising up in the still night! That moment will ever dwell in my memory.



Last night I heard a low murmur of chanting coming down the street, accompanied with a noise of many feet. I hastened to the window, and there beheld *a strange* procession of figures in white

robes, with peaked hoods coming over the face, and only leaving two holes for the eyes to peer through. Cross bones and a skull were worked in conspicuous places on their robes, and they bore a bier between them, on which lay the corpse of a man, with the face and feet exposed to view. It was a solemn scene —one went in front bearing a cross, and four carried torches, which flared into the night; while they chaunted solemnly as they bore the dead to his resting place, and the church bells tolled. It is the custom in Italy to carry dead bodies with their faces exposed.

These " brotherhoods," I believe, subsist throughout Italy, and the noblest of the land belong to them. At Florence we were told the grand duke was one of them, and took his turn with the rest.

One large bell, never used for anything else, tolled out its solemn warning to assemble the brethren when one had died, or met with any serious accident. The disguise is so complete, that none of the bearers even would know their next neighbour. I have made a drawing of the strange procession from memory.

April 19.

We drove yesterday into the Campagna, or great flat plain that surrounds Rome: it is most unlike any other place I ever saw. The very ground looks parched with heat, and in places looks bare and cracked in large fissures, as if the thirsty earth gasped for breath. In other places it is covered with a carpet of luxuriant verdure, and enamelled with flowers, while the desolate plain is crossed by

the rows of huge arches of the old Roman aqueducts which brought waters from the hills that bound the plain over to the city. One uninterrupted row of arches, the Acqua Claudia, is *now* six miles in length! Three of these aqueducts are now in use, and supply the fountains of Rome with water; the others are in various stages of most picturesque decay. The Campagna is dotted over with ruins and old tombs, in which the shepherds live, and often die from the malaria. Clad in goatskins, they tend their flocks of goats and sheep, attended by fierce dogs, regardless of the herds of wild buffaloes which feed around the plain, and are a great source of terror to strangers, as they not unfrequently pursue a single person either on foot or horseback. They are strange-looking creatures,

with huge bristly manes, and glaring red eyes.

We saw a good many beautiful green lizards running about the crevices of old stone walls, and up the hot sand-banks Flora and Helen persuaded Mr. N. to let them get out of the carriage to try and catch one of these graceful creatures, which measured about eighteen inches, half of that length being taken up by its slender pointed tail. It was of a very brilliant green, merging into yellow, and the little girls had a long chase after it, as they are nimble-footed little things. There is a tradition here, that when the little lizards are pursued by their deadly enemies the vipers, they will fly to meet men to seek their protection. Of course, I cannot tell how true this may be; but *there is* another saying, which I would

fain believe, to justify my fondness for these pretty creatures, and that is, that the sleeping shepherds are often apprised of the approach of serpents by the lizards running over their faces to awaken them.

We found the other day on Monte Mario, growing wild, the delicious little sweet-scented *Cyclamen*, so prized in our English gardens; and to-day we gathered two beautiful anemones; the leaves of one of them are like our wild wood anemone, but the flower is a bright yellow, (*Anemone ranunculoides*, Linnæus); the other also with anemone leaves, but with a lilac flower divided into a quantity of small petals, or flower-leaves, something like the petals of a China aster. This is called *Anemone Apennina*, or the anemone of the Apennine mountains.

The English white campion, so common all about our English lanes, grows plentifully here; and also the yellow broom, with large flowers. We have gathered on the Campagna the *Vicia Narbonensis*, (Linnæus,) or wild bean, which never grows in England. The stem is thick, short, and branchy; leaves ending in a whorl, like our garden bean; the flower papilionaceous, of a dingy pink colour, slightly marked with black lines; grows about a foot from the ground; leaves downy.

On the ruins of the famous old tomb of Cecilia Metella we gathered ivy with yellow berries, which I believe to be an exceedingly rare plant; it is called by our old botanist *Hedera Poetarum*, or "The Ivy of the Poets." Its berries are oval, and of *a bright* yellow colour.

A few days ago Mr. N. took a long walk on the plain, and brought back with him a very curious plant of the Orobanche kind. It is as tall as the common snap-dragon, and the flowers are of the same shape, but it has no leaves; and its head of white flowers striped with lilac and yellow grows at the top of a thick purplish stem. There are some of the genus that grow in England (*Orobanche major* and *minor*, greater and less Broom-rape), but I never saw this kind before.

The pretty white cistus is plentiful here, and the flowers are almost as large as those of our common dog-rose, and tinged with yellow.

The laburnums are in full blow, and deliciously sweet. We enjoyed our drive yesterday on the whole exceedingly: the

sunshine was most brilliant, and the distant hills looked very beautiful, every shadow of their various undulations being clearly seen. Ever, dear Louisa,

Your most affectionate Sister.

LETTER XI.

PROTESTANT BURYING GROUND—ORCHISES ON MONTE TESTACEO.

April 24.

THE Protestant burial-ground is a beautiful spot, near the Porta San Paolo, on the slope of a hill, looking over the Eternal city, and in the direction of the east, so that the sun's first rays rest upon this warm and sheltered spot. At the top of it rises the handsome old pyramid of Caius Cestius, erected eighteen hundred years ago, and little altered from its first appearance, except that the massy white stones have become black, and that the creeping ivy has trailed around it.

Altogether it is a very beautiful spot,

and must have a deep interest, I should think, to all visitors in this land; even if they are so blest as not to have to leave their nearest and dearest reposing here, as has been the case with so many. The upper burying-ground is in terraces, and full of the sweetest flowers. Many Americans and Germans are buried here.

From the Protestant burying-ground we went to Monte Testaceo, which is close by. It is a remarkably smooth round green hill, famous for the wild flowers that grow there, and in particular for the orchises; but the marvel is, that it seems entirely constructed of ancient Roman earthenware, and yet it is quite a large hill! You cannot poke a hole anywhere with a stick through the velvety green turf without routing up underneath *it fragments* of earthenware, pieces of

thick handles, spouts, &c. of the hard baked red clay, which the Romans appear chiefly to have used for their earthen vessels. I have never heard any clear explanation of this wonder, and only relate to you what I saw. At the foot of the hill are extensive excavations used as cellars and to keep corn in, and these are all cut through masses of pottery ware!

The children were delighted to gather a handful of orchises; that curious tribe of plants which seem to bear such a wonderful likeness to living creatures. There was the lizard orchis, the monkey orchis, and the bee orchis, besides a delicate little yellowish white orchis, which, I believe, is very scarce in other places, and is called the *Orchis Romana*, or Roman Orchis. We also gathered *Orchis fusca*, *Orchis mascula*, *Orchis maculata*, and the pretty

little Roman hyacinth, something between a hyacinth and a squill. A friend gave us the other day a specimen of the *Orchis Conopsea,* or Aromatic Orchis, which was found in Tuscany.

In our drive home from Monte Testaceo we saw one of the pretty little light vehicles, which the peasants use for the purpose of carrying hay and grass—so much more convenient than our great heavy carts. The man was standing in one of the two bags of strong net of which this machine consisted, driving along at a good round pace, and I have made a sketch of the whole concern for you. I am bringing my aunt a mosaic brooch, composed of exceedingly minute pieces; the subject is an Italian girl by a fountain. Ever, dearest Louisa,

Your most affectionate Sister.

LETTER XII.

LAST DAY IN ROME—VATICAN—FAREWELL TO ROME.

May 7.

My dearest Louisa, I must tell you all about our last day in Rome, which is getting so intensely hot, as to be almost insufferable; and yet there is certainly an enchantment about the place, which makes us all very sorry to tear ourselves away from it! We are now obliged to lie down with closed shutters as the Italians do, for a couple of hours after our early dinner, which particular nap they call a "siesta." Our Italian mistress has a nice baby about four months old, and brought him yesterday to show the little girls how he was dressed. In the first

place, he has a little shift on, which reaches a good way below his feet. This is doubled down over the feet, and then the mother takes a long strip of calico bandage, many yards in length, and winds it round and round upon this as tight as she can, till under the arms, where it is fastened. Till the child was a month old the arms were bound down too! So you perceive it cannot stir or bend its little legs, and is quite stiff, so that wherever it may be stuck upright, there it remains! Is not this a most extraordinary custom?

We did all the packing up we could, yesterday, that we might have our time free for driving about Rome this last day: and in the first place we went to St. Peter's. We walked about the interior *for some* time, and then mounted up to

the dome. The ascent to the top of the roof, whence the dome springs, is so easy that a horse might go up, turning spirally in a slope, with rims of stone at regular intervals to keep the feet steady. At length we came out upon the roof, a huge flat space, really quite like a town, as there are a good many small houses built upon it, (and it extends over many acres,) belonging to the workmen constantly employed in repairs on this huge fabric. There is also a small fountain to supply them with water, and it is difficult to persuade oneself that you are not standing on the ground. The view from hence is glorious! Rome lay spread out before us, and we looked with a last lingering look upon its beauties. There stood its noble ruins where it was built on its Seven Hills, which may still be

traced, though faintly, as the soil has gradually accumulated in the valleys, and diminished their height: beyond the city walls the flat unbroken surface of the broad Campagna stretches forth till it is bounded by the Sabine hills, or the distant Apennines, like the frame of some mighty picture; while a line of mist along the arid plain shows the course of the mighty Tiber. We mounted up a perpendicular iron ladder from the highest gallery at the top of the dome, which leads into the ball itself. We staid hardly two minutes in it, as it was dark and very hot; but it is a fine thing to say that we have actually been in the ball at the top of St. Peter's, 430 feet above the ground!

Descending again, we took another *look at that* beautiful church, and let the

heavy curtain at the door swing-to behind us, with real sorrow. We then went into the Vatican, to have another sight of the most beautiful of all pictures we have yet seen,—the Transfiguration, by Raphael.

I feel how very inadequate is the idea these letters will have given you of the Eternal city; they are like a shadow, a very faint shadow of some beautiful scene in a magic lantern; and I have not been able to give you even a short sketch of half the interesting and splendid things we have seen. I have told you nothing of the palaces, of the pictures, and statues, and am now only going to say a few words about the great Vatican Palace itself, which contains the very wonders of the world, both as to statuary and painting, in its huge galleries!

The Vatican is a vast collection of

buildings, erected at various times, attached to St. Peter's, and the immense pile is more like separate buildings accidentally joined together, than one regular structure. It is a common saying, that this palace, with its gardens, covers a space as large as the whole town of Turin!

It contains eight grand staircases, and 200 small ones; twenty courts, and 4422 apartments.

Many successive visits of hours in duration can only enable one to see a small part of the curious and precious things it contains, both in books, manuscripts, ancient and modern sculpture, and paintings; and I felt sincere regret in leaving this collection of treasures.

Long galleries (some 1000 feet in length) are severally devoted to particular *subjects*. One contains all the objects of

interest found in the catacombs, most curious records of the early Christians. Another is filled with Greek inscriptions taken from old tombs; another with busts; another with vases, &c. Some of the halls of sculpture contain the most famous statues in the world, such as the Apollo Belvedere, and the Laöcoon; and the old Egyptian remains are very interesting. But we passed hastily through these treasures to-day; and walked once more round the open porticos or "loggie," where are Raphael's fresco paintings of Scripture events, commonly called here "Raphael's Bible." One or two are done entirely by himself, others by his pupils and by great artists from his designs. Having walked round these once again, we went into the small gallery where are kept the most precious gems of

painting, and gazed for an hour at them, at last tearing ourselves with difficulty away.

The three I remember best are, "The Annunciation of the Virgin," (I believe by Baroccio,) "The Communion of St. Jerome," by Domenichino; and "The Transfiguration," by Raphael. In the upper part of the last picture, in a blaze of light, is Mount Tabor: the three apostles are lying on the ground, unable to bear the supernatural light proceeding from our blessed Saviour, who is represented floating in the air accompanied by Moses and Elijah. Below is a representation of the sufferings of humanity: on one side are nine apostles, on the other a crowd of people are bringing to them a boy possessed of a devil. His limbs are fear*fully* convulsed, and every countenance

wears an expression of terror. Two of the apostles point upwards, to indicate the only power by which he can be cured. In the head of our Saviour, on which he lavished all his powers of majesty and beauty, we see at once the highest perfection of art, and the last work of Raphael.

After leaving the Vatican, the children persuaded Mr. N. to drive to the fountain of Trevi, because they had heard a saying often repeated here, that whoever drinks of its waters, shall at some future day revisit Rome. The tears came into my eyes as I saw their bright young faces bending down over its glassy mirror; and I wondered when and how (if ever) they would really behold it again! They seemed sorry to take leave of everything; even two quaint old land tortoises, who live in the little garden underneath our

window, and crawl about, these warm days, under the orange trees.

Veletri, May 8.

This morning we left Rome—wonderful Eternal city! This is a prettily situated place among high mountains; and we had wild boar here for dinner; but what can I tell you about in a small town like this? Every thing seems insignificant after Rome! As we left it this morning, passing the Church of St. John Lateran, and then the long line of aqueducts, Mr. N. repeated aloud Mrs. Hemans's beautiful lament over its fallen grandeur, which must end my letter:—

"Rome! Rome! thou art no more
As thou hast been!
On thy seven hills of yore
Thou sat'st a queen.

"Rome! thine imperial brow
Never shall rise:
What hast thou left thee now?
Thou hast thy skies!

"Blue, deeply blue they are,
Gloriously bright:
Veiling thy wastes afar
With coloured light.

"Thou hast the south's rich gift
Of sudden song—
A charmed fountain, swift,
Joyous and strong.

"Thou hast fair forms that move
With queenly tread;
Thou hast proud fanes above
Thy mighty dead!

"Yet wears thy Tiber's shore
A mournful mien:
Rome! Rome! thou art no more
As thou hast been!"

LETTER XIII.

NAPLES—GROUPS ON THE MOLE—MOUNT VESUVIUS —MACARONI.

Naples. La Gran Bretagna, May 13.

I HAVE just awoke from a sound sleep, my dearest Louisa, and yet it is only four o'clock in the afternoon; but the weather is so intensely hot, that, according to the Italian custom, we regularly shut up the house, and lie down, after our early dinner about two o'clock. This place is delightful; we slept at Terracina, May 9th, (the day after I closed my last letter) and May 10th, at St. Agata, arriving here on the 11th. The views were splendid all the way from Terracina, where *we got* the first sight of the Mediter-

ranean and Mount Vesuvius. We passed groves of orange trees, and myrtles, and laurustinus, and admired the graceful vineyards of this country, with the vines trained in festoons from tree to tree, not up little stumpy stakes, as in France and the northern part of Italy. This is, I think, usually reckoned the most beautiful spot in Italy; and I feel as if I could not look enough at its beauties! It is the last of Italy we shall see, for Mr. N. has decided to turn homewards in a fortnight, going by sea from hence to Genoa, and from Genoa to Marseilles. From Marseilles we are to return home across France, viâ Nismes, Avignon, Nevers, and Orleans.

The great mount Vesuvius is an object of constant interest, and ever varying. The cone and summit are whitened with

snow, yet the smoke coming out of the crater hangs over it by day like a dense cloud, and is illuminated at night by flashes of fire. The children are very anxious to see an eruption; but I cannot say I wish for one whilst we are so near. Yesterday evening we went by the railroad to Castel-a-mare, a truly Italian sunshine resting all the time on the blue sea and the shores of the bay.

We got home to suffer some of the evils attendant on this hot climate, for the mosquitoes kept us in a fever the whole evening. We flapped them away with our handkerchiefs, and slapped them with our hands; but there were myriads for every dozen we slew, and they seemed hungry for revenge. I hoped for a respite when in bed, but alas! one large mosquito, *by some* unlucky chance, had established

himself inside my mosquito net, (a large bag of gauze, in which, throughout Italy, the beds are enclosed, and which you tuck in all round you with the sheet,) and remained with me there, keeping me awake most of the night.

May 14.

We have been spending several hours on the mole, where most of the humours of Naples are to be seen; and a merry people the Neapolitans are, though most completely idle, and dirty to boot. The mole of Naples is a strong, well constructed stone pier, jutting far into the sea, and having a lighthouse at the end. In the warm seasons of the year (and that is nearly seven months out of the twelve) it is the favourite

lounging place of the middle and lower classes of Neapolitans. Here they can hear the cooling plash of the sea upon the rocks, and inhale the pure evening air. And as if this were not pleasure and bliss enough, under that glorious sky, and with the fairest view upon earth spread before and around, hither resort singers and conjurors, mountebanks, and improvisatores, men with learned pigs and dogs that can tell fortunes, to afford amusement to the loungers.

Punch, too,—the universal Punch, known almost throughout the world, and found alike in Egypt, Syria, and Turkey, Persia, China, London and Japan,—Punch is here in his glory, and performs evening after evening to a never failing circle of admirers.

The Canta Storia, or "story singer,"

had collected the largest audience round him on the mole this afternoon. Seated on a rough stone, with his guitar resting on his lap, and a picturesque group of half dressed men round him with naked feet and arms, white shirts and coloured silk caps, and a bright coloured silk scarf round their waists, he was singing in a measured style some of the feats of the great Neapolitan hero,—the crusading Rinaldo,—as described by Tasso in his Jerusalem Delivered. Evening after evening, we were told, would these poor fellows gather round their story singer, and devour his strains with an earnestness of expression on every countenance, which proved how much they relished what he sang. Fine athletic fellows were some of them, and sunbrowned the faces, long and black the hair, and black and flash-

ing the eyes of all of them. And they gathered in groups round the old bard or minstrel, as the Greeks may be supposed to have gathered round the itinerant Homer; some of them standing with their arms crossed on their almost bare chests; some sitting on the stones which capped the parapet of the pier, some on wooden stools, and some cross-legged on the pavement. In this fashion they would often stay from long before sunset of a summer evening until well on to the midnight hour, listening over and over again to the same story; the old man, like the story-tellers of Egypt and Turkey, never beginning and ending his tale on the same night, and generally breaking off where the story was the most interesting. Mrs. N. has kindly given me a volume of Pinelli's *etchings*, in which you will one day see

these and many other groups delineated in the most spirited way.

Not far from the old story-singer was another group surrounding an "*improvisatore.*" He is one who has the power of relating *in flowing verse* a tale, or poem, necessarily made as he goes on! for it is on a subject given to him by the audience. I heard a lady at Rome, who had this gift; and I was perfectly astonished at the easy manner in which she performed her task before a crowded audience, evidently warming as she proceeded with her subject,—which was the death of Tasso. Should you not have liked to be on the mole with us, and to have seen the various amusements going on there?

May 17.

Yesterday, my dearest Louisa, we ascended *Mount Vesuvius;* and a hard scramble we had to reach the top of the burning mountain. We drove to the foot, and then ascended about half way on mules. Walking then became so very difficult, and we had to take such long strides from one great stepping-stone to another, that Mrs. N. and I were each harnessed in a strange kind of way between two guides,—one going before, and holding in his hands two straps fastened to a strong leathern belt that went round our waists, by which we were pulled along; and another behind each of us also holding two straps. The children were left at home; and we found the ascent as much as ever we could do, even with the *guides'* help.

Having attained a sort of landing-place, we rested and ate our dinners, and then set out again, now taking our guides' arms. We examined several small mouths of craters, which manifestly communicated with each other, as throwing stones into one affected the other. The lava (or hardened liquid which had at some former time flowed out of the burning mountain) became gradually more and more hot; and when we arrived at the top of the great crater, the heat was so painful to our feet, that we could not stand still, but walked on, each with one guide, on a narrow path, between the great crater, or mouth, of the burning mountain (and which kept occasionally throwing up stones and smoke) on one side, and a steep precipitous slope of the mountain on the other.

We arrived at a dazzling bright yellow and red tract of sulphur, so hot, that I could not hold the bits we broke off! The path soon became lost in heaps of ashes, thrown up in the last few days. We went up to a small mouth of a crater, which was red within, and made a stick blaze by putting it into it. The whole was a fearful and awful sight, which I cannot attempt to describe. The sound of boiling cauldrons within the crater made one tremble: the sulphureous smoke nearly choked us. We descended the side of the mountain opposite to that at which we had come up, and went quickly, our feet plunging deep into the soft ashes. A butterfly was flying over this dreary tract, where there was not the slightest sign of vegetation. I *was* astonished when the guides, scraping away

the ashes with their hands, showed us clear white *snow* underneath!

Altogether, we had a very interesting day, and did not mind being dreadfully tired afterwards.

May 18.

Flora and Helen are immensely amused to see the way in which all the peasants here devour *macaroni*, and the relish with which they eat it. In all the corners of the streets they are to be seen swallowing it. Some macaroni-sellers have shops, where they prepare and retail it; but much the greater number cook it on movable furnaces in the open air, and sell it to their hungry customers in the streets. Happy is the Neapolitan who can afford "macaroni

with meat gravy;" but those, who cannot, eat the common sort, boiled in plain water, and show some skill in the way in which they convey the long ribbons of macaroni down their throats, holding one end high above their mouths, and gradually gulping it down—for knives and forks are never thought of. The first question strangers are asked, is almost always, "How do you like our macaroni?" and if you can reply "Beyond all things," you will rise considerably in the estimation of a Neapolitan.

LETTER XIV.

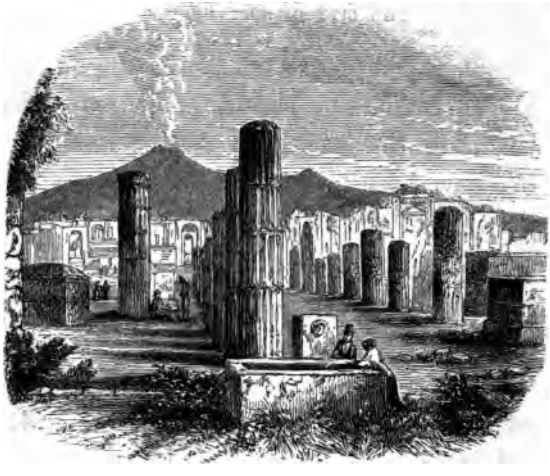
THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

Naples, May 20.

I HAVE curious sights, indeed, to tell you of in this letter, my dearest Louisa! We have been to Pompeii—we have seen the City of the Dead!

Twelve miles from Naples—eighteen hundred years ago—stood a large and populous city, full of inhabitants, rich in works of art, adorned with large and fine public buildings, temples, theatres, and public baths, and beautified by the villas and palaces of the noble and great of that day. All the works of daily life were going on; the cellars were full of wine—the shops were filled with their various

commodities; the soldier stood keeping watch at his appointed place;—when suddenly there came from the neighbouring



volcanic mountain—now known by the name of Mount Vesuvius—a tremendous explosion, and overwhelmed them all!

It was on the 24th of August, A.D.

79, that the mountain—which had been for years considered an extinct volcano (and, therefore, not dangerous) — burst out afresh, with a fearful and terrible noise. A huge pillar of dark smoke rose from the top of the mountain; the sky was darkened for three days; the waters of the ocean itself receded from the shore; and the crater poured forth such volleys of ashes, fire, and red hot lava, that the towns of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabiæ, were entirely buried beneath them! A most minute account of this event is preserved in the letters of the younger Pliny, then consul at Rome, who was born in the year of our Lord 62, and there describes the death of his uncle, Pliny the naturalist, and the eruption of Vesuvius, in a letter to the great Roman historian Tacitus.*

* *See* Melmoth's Pliny, Book vi. Let. 16, 20.

Somewhere about 1750, as some peasants were digging a well in a vineyard, they made the discovery of this buried town. The king immediately had excavations made, which have been going on till the present time; and no doubt there are many things still buried.

There is now a railroad from Naples to Pompeii, and by it we went to spend a long day there the day before yesterday.*

It does seem strange, indeed, to walk through the deserted streets of this city,

* The panorama now exhibiting in London (1849) gives a most accurate idea of the present state of Pompeii. You are supposed to be standing on the roof of a house, and, looking round, you see the progress which has been made in the excavations around you, and how much yet remains buried of the ancient city. The paintings on the walls of the houses are accurately given, and look *fresh* and beautiful; and beyond, you see the *blue* Mediterranean and the Bay of Naples spread *out* before you.

to observe the luxuries of eighteen hundred years ago,—the baths, the theatres, and to see the very houses left as the owners perished in them! Many of the things found in the houses have been removed to the Museum at Naples, where we intend to spend a day soon in examining them; and some of the many fresco-paintings found on the walls have been skilfully removed for their better preservation; as the air, coming in contact with them after their long sepulture, soon effaces the colours. Of course the houses are roofless; but except that, many of them are in most perfect preservation. Most of them are only one story high—none more than two. They are generally built round an open court, with a fountain in the middle;—that of Diomede is reckoned one of those in best

preservation, and was the first house discovered. The court is oblong, and surrounded by a portico, with stuccoed pillars; and in the midst of the court was a garden, with six columns, supporting a sort of bower. The fountains in the midst of the courts seem to have been much adorned with various devices, and, amongst others, with artificial ducks and birds of earthenware! The mosaic pavements are very perfect. Seventeen skeletons were found in the cellar of the house of Diomede; one yet held in its bony hand a bunch of keys, and a quantity of golden ornaments and coins, which, eighteen hundred years ago, it was going to escape with! By one of the gates the skeleton of a sentinel was found, who had never deserted his post; and beside *him* was a stone bench, where, doubt-

less, the soldiers used to sit and drink, and where still may be seen the marks of cups having been set down wet!

The luxury of the arrangement in the great bath-rooms seems to have been very great. More houses and shops are being excavated every day.

We passed in and out of many of the shops, where now they leave what things they find, instead of removing everything as formerly to the museum at Naples. In one was a vessel exactly resembling our tea-urns in shape; in others were surgical instruments of all kinds; phials of medicine; boxes of pills; vessels for eating, drinking, and cooking; workmen's tools; lamps, tables, couches; necklaces, bracelets, and ornaments of every shape you can imagine; helmets, keys, tickets for the theatre, and small bells, which on

being touched, rang out the same tones they had echoed with in their masters' hands,—those masters now buried and forgotten for centuries!

On the floor of one coffee-house *Salve* is written in mosaic in large letters;—a kindly salutation to those who entered. I was surprised to see how beautiful the paintings were; animals of every kind, &c. all exquisitely done. I believe some of the colours cannot be exactly imitated now, especially one very deep sort of rose colour.

Perhaps, on the whole, this was the most deeply interesting day I ever spent. Returning from the tranquil city of tombs to the din and clatter of Naples was very striking. It was a holiday, and the noise, therefore, was even unusually great. *The* peasants came galloping down the *great* causeway that runs between the

public gardens and the sea, with fearful speed. Luckily, their spirited little black horses are both strong and sure-footed, or there would be frequent accidents with the overloaded little two-wheeled carriages, so common here. Groups of men and women are coming home dancing along the streets their own peculiar noisy, lively "Tarantella." One or two play on the tambourine, and guitar, while the others scream in chorus. The women wear the folded white linen head-dress, so often seen near Rome, rather more raised from the head, with silver pins. They delight in finery, and their richly-embroidered boddices and gold bead necklaces are often worth a great sum.

To-morrow we are to see a girl take the veil, in a nunnery near Naples.

Ever, dear Louisa,

Your affectionate Sister.

LETTER XV.

TAKING THE VEIL—FIRE-FLIES—GROUPS IN THE STREETS—DEPARTURE FROM ITALY.

May 22.

We went yesterday, dear Louisa, to see the poor young girl I told you of take the veil; and truly thankful do I feel to belong to a religion in which such sacrifices are not perpetrated. It was a very strict order of nuns that she had vowed to enter; and she must never, never, in all the coming years of her long life, leave that cloister again,—not even look upon the gorgeous view of sea, and sky, and town.

When she first appeared, she was decked in every kind of gorgeous ornament, and one by one they were taken

from her, and her long hair was all cut off, till at last the black veil was put over her, and she vanished into the interior of the nunnery.

We felt so melancholy after the sad ceremony, that we were glad to refresh ourselves by a drive into the country, and did not return till quite late. I think I have not mentioned to you before, what forms one of the great beauties of an Italian evening: I mean the swarms of fire-flies that glance about in the orange-groves, like shooting stars. You remember how fond you used to be of picking up glow-worms on our own green hills at home? If you can imagine those flying about in thousands, and shining with a much brighter, though more fitful light, you will have some idea of the loveliness of the Italian fire-flies.

When we were admiring the fire-flies Mr. N. told us a very curious story about them. When he was staying two years ago at a place in Staffordshire during a particularly hot summer, the bed-room windows were left open at night, and a real Italian fire-fly came in, and lighted on one of the beds. The occupant, in great alarm, killed it instantly, but Mr. N. saw it before its light was quite extinguished, and there could be no doubt it was an Italian fire-fly. This suggested to him the following verses :—

" Borne on Italia's balmy breeze
A little fire-fly came ;
And star-like o'er the swelling seas
It gleamed with fitful flame.

" It boldly left its southern home,
With skies so deeply blue ;
In colder climes it came to roam
Where paler flowers grew.

" How could it leave those gardens bright,
Where the sweet orange blooms,
And freely o'er the dewless night
Pours forth its sweet perfumes?

" How could it leave the myrtle bow'r
Beside the fountain's spray,
Where flitting fast from flow'r to flow'r
Its radiant brethren stray?

" Alas! it only came to die
Far from its native land:
For rough hands slew the little fly
From fair Italia's strand.

" The fountains in its distant home
Are gushing ever fair,
But the bright fly that lov'd to roam
May never more be there!" *

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* This curious fact happened in August, 1846. The only other instance on record, that I am aware of, of a fire-fly being seen in England, is in a Paper in the *Philosophical Transactions* for the year 1684; it is written by a Mr. Waller, who describes the creature as an English "flying glow-worm," and saw it at Northaw, in Hertfordshire.

Sometimes the peasants stick one or two in their cap, wrapt in a small piece of paper, and their bright light looks very odd shining through it.

The gesticulations of all the people here would startle our cold-mannered countrymen very much. The Italian master who teaches Flora and Helen has explained some of them to us, and some speak for themselves; for instance, the beggars, who swarm in Naples, constantly rap their chins with their right hands whenever you look at them, and this is the regular sign for hunger. If you wish to make them understand that you have nothing for them, a shake of the right hand from the wrist with *one* forefinger extended, is the only denial that has any effect on them, as we have *found* by experience. Turning your right

hand open towards your departing friend, and closing it gently two or three times over, is equivalent to an affectionate good-bye; and the wave of the hand closed, with the forefinger and little finger extended, is giving a blessing. For this reason, I suppose, it is, that innumerable little coral hands are made in Naples, in that form, and are considered by this superstitious people, when worn about the person, to keep off "the evil eye," or any accident.

In the Bay, on board the Ercolano Steamer.
May 24.

We are just established on board the steamer that is to take us to Genoa; and I must write you a few lines before the coast of Italy has faded from my view. I am rejoicing in the prospect of being

so soon at home again with you and my aunt in our own dear country, far, far more delightful to live in (take it for all in all) than any other I have seen. I am also, I hope, sincerely thankful for a tour of much enjoyment, and many opportunities of improvement. I do not really wish it longer; for though the weather has been extraordinarily propitious, and our travels, thank GOD, as free from accidents as from illness, or misfortune of any sort, I am decidedly homesick, and anxious to find myself on English ground once more. But yet I feel an indescribable sadness on taking leave of this lovely land, probably for ever, that I can neither subdue, nor account for!

As we came down through the streets this evening, and passed along the old *mole,* the town looked alive and gay as

ever. We passed a puppet-show, with its mimic pantomime going on so skilfully, that the figures seemed moving entirely of their own accord; and a "Ciarlatano," or "quack doctor," holding forth with a great black and green snake twisted round his neck, and a stand full of bottles and phials, containing pickled lizards and preserved spiders before him. We had a last glass of delicious water at the water-seller's booth, which is painted all over with bright colours, and adorned with flags, and peacock's-feathers, while his provision of snow, as he cries aloud, is "fresh from the coolest cavern in Monte S. Angelo;" and we gazed once more at the old *letter-writer* sitting with his little table before him, ready to indite epistles for the peasants at the small cost of a penny, or twopence, a-piece. He

has plenty of customers, and just now a handsome girl was kneeling beside him, and whispering into his ear with great earnestness the words to be written on a blank sheet of paper on his knee.

But I am forgetting. I am actually on board the vessel that is to take me away from the land of the south. The anchor is weighing as I write; and it is almost painful to see, as I can still do, the old groups of listeners round the story-singer; and the improvisatore, and the man with the dancing-dogs, going on as if nothing had happened, while we are leaving fair Naples probably for ever

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One hour later. May 24.

We are at this instant leaving the bay. The sea is calm and motionless, and the *moon* bright, as I conclude my letter.

"And now farewell to Italy!—perhaps
For ever! * * * Oft while I live,
If once again in England, once again
In my own chimney nook, as night steals on,
With half-shut eyes reclining, oft, methinks,
While the wind blusters, and the pelting rain
Clatters without, shall I recall to mind
The scenes, occurrences, I met with here,
And wander in Elysium."

ROGERS' *Italy.*

THE END.

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.